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TREATISE

UPON

The Walk of FAITH.

By W. ROMAINE, M.A.

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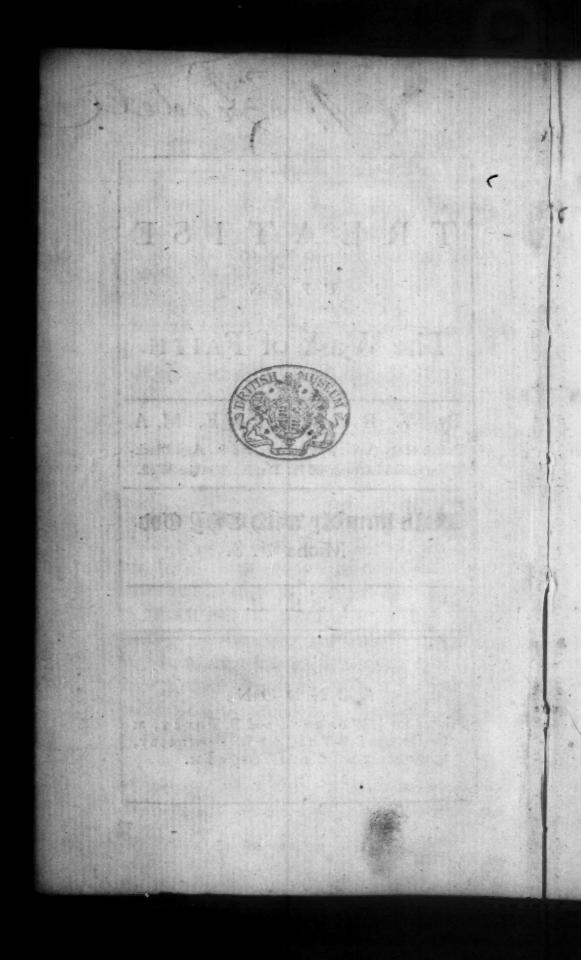
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CHAP. VII.

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The believer goes on his way rejoicing in God.

APPY is the man, to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe. He has the blessing of peace. He is reconciled to God through faith in the blood of Jesus: And he is freely justified through faith in the righteousness of Jesus. The Father has A 2 accepted

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accepted him in his beloved Son, and it is the joy of his foul to know it; therefore he loves God, because God first loved him. In the enjoyment of this love he finds his heaven begun. By the same Spirit, who manifested it and shed it abroad in his heart, he is kept feeking for more discoveries of it. In every appointed means he waits. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth his foul after more of the presence of God, and of the light of his loving countenance. Having a command-Seek ye my facehe obeys it from his heart: but his chief view in obedience is to behold the face of the Lord turned to him in love. He wants fellowship with God in duty, which highly ennobles and also endears it to him. He performs it in faith, and in a free spirit. He goes to it, as a beloved

loved child to a most loving parent: and his heavenly Father meets him in it, receives him graciously, speaks to his heart, and makes him fenfible, that he can deny him no manner of thing, which is good. Hence the ways of duty become ways of pleasantness. The farther he advances in them and the more spiritual he grows in the performance of them, he finds clearer communications of his Father's grace and love, which still increase his joy, and afford him furer earnests, and happier foretaltes of joy unspeakable and full of glory.

As for the ungodly it is not so with them. They are always seeking after joy. They are busy, and weary themselves in the pursuit of it, but they cannot find it. While they are turned in heart from the Lord, they look downwards for it;

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where it is not. They expect it will fpring out of the ground: and if they cannot discover it upon the furface, they will dig into the bowels of the earth for treasures of hidden joy. But they disquiet themselves in vain. It is the fovereign decree of the almighty, that nothing can make a finner truly happy but God in Christ: this they will not believe; and therefore they go from creature to creature, from object to object, enquiring, Where is the best joy to be found? Each promises them-it is in me. But each difappoints them. And yet they go on, feeking it to day in that very thing, which deluded them yesterday. Yea, their foolish hearts are willingly deluded. They love to be pursuing what it is impossible they should attain. If after many trials they find the emptiness of one creature

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creature comfort, then they turn to another. And they will try the whole compass of beings and things, and will at last die in the trial, rather than seek for joy, where it is holy, perfect, and everlasting.

The believer is faved from this vain pursuit. He has been convinced of the insufficiency of the creature to make him happy. He has seen an end of all perfection in He can fay with the preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity"allis changeable and imperfect under the fun: for the whole world lieth in wickedness and under the curse. Deeply sensible of his error in having fought for joy in the way of destruction, he now seeks it in the living God. Here he comes to the fupreme good, the spring-head of true joy: and the streams which he receives from thence are always in A 4 proportion

proportion to his faith. If this be strong, there is great joy in the foul. If this be weak, joy is at a low ebb. The effect is according to the cause which produces it. Joy in God is the effect of faith; according to the apostle's prayer, "Now the God of "hope fill you with all joy in believing." There is a present fulness of joy which we have by believing, as there is a future fulness of joy, which we shall have by sense. So, that joy rifes as believing doesfulness of believing brings in ALL joy-present enjoyment increasing as the title to future is clear. The present is the divine pledge of the future, and is therefore given us, that by believing we may now rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of our falvation.

From hence it appears, how necessary it is to the believer's walking in joy, that his understanding should be clearly enlightened with the knowlege of the doctrines of grace, and that his heart should be established in the belief of them. Thou canst not, O my foul, review them too much, nor meditate upon them too long: for they enter into the very essence of all true joy. Study the gospel method of making reconciliation for iniquity, which was the work of Immanuel, and of reconciling man to God, which is the work of the holy Spirit. Has he done this in thee, and art thou reconciled to God? Is thy conscience at peace, is thine heart happy through faith in the atonement and righteoufness of thy Saviour? Art thou fatisfied of thy perfect acceptance in the beloved? Dost thou therefore obey thy Father out of gratitude, and go to duty to meet him, A 5

and

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and to have fellowship with him in his love, and to glorify him for it. Dost thou find his presence? Is he with thee in all means, and art thou feeking in them for nearer and more intimate communion with him? Since this is thy case, what return wilt thou make for such inestimable favors? Surely, thou wilt be glad in the Lord, and wilt rejoice in the God of thy falvation. Being at peace with him, and a partaker of his love-waiting for the establishing of this peace and love in the way of obedience, and expecting more communion with thy God in the way of duty, who can have greater reason to rejoice? A faved finner, delivered by mere grace from wrath and hell, entitled to all spiritual blessings in Christ Jefus, and already admitted to partake of them, may fing and make melody

in his heart all the way to heaven. And yet alas! how often art thou, O my foul, in heaviness, walking in diffress, and cast down, as if thy hope of rejoicing was in vain. And this is not thy case alone. It is too common. How many of God's children spend their days in a mournful frame, and feem to forget their high calling and undoubted title to the fulness of joy. Meditate a little upon the ingratitude of this behaviour, and may the gospel motives to rejoice in the Lord always be the means of faving thee from an unthankful and mournful temper.

First observe, he requires it of thee. The scripture speaks much of the holy joy of believers, and calls for it. They are in duty bound to be glad in their God, as much as to pray to him: For he is always bestowing mercies upon

them,

them, which demand their everlasting tribute of thanks; and they cannot be thankful without being joyful. How closely were these two united in the holy pfalmist? None ever more famous for praifing God, or for rejoicing in God. What he felt himself he often exhorts the redeemed to experience: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righ-" teous; for praise is comely for "the upright: Light is fown for " the righteous, and gladness for "the upright in heart: Rejoice in " the Lord ye righteous, and give " thanks at the rememberance of " his holiness:" Remember his righteousness and holiness, how great they are, and how great the grace is, which has found out a way to make you righteous and holy: Remember those bleffings with faith, and your hearts will be glad, and your

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your mouth will praise God with joyful lips. What a fense had the prophet of those bleffings, when he broke forth into this acknowlegement? " I will greatly rejoice " in the Lord, my foul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath " cloathed me with the garments " of falvation, he hath covered me " with the robe of righteousness, " as a bridegroom decketh himfelf " with ornaments, and as a bride " adorneth herself with her jew-" els." These are the wedding garments, with which the heavenly bridegroom adorns his church, and in which he introduces her to the eternal banquet of love. Bleffed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the lamb. Bleffed are they indeed: for they are arrayed in royal robes; their fouls are all glorious with the beauties of Immanuel,

manuel, with his divine righteoufness and matchless graces. They have reason now to rejoice greatly: For they shall soon come to Sion with fongs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and forrow and fighing shall flee away for ever. These feriptures prove evidently, that believers are called upon to rejoice: It is their bounden duty to be glad in their God, for they are not living like his children, and making up their happiness in their Father's love, unless they are rejoicing in his rich and everlasting bleffings: For

Secondly, Joy arises from the sense of some good. Joy in God arises from the sense of his being our chief good, and of our interest in him. And this is the joy of faith: Which is not in the least like the light frothy joy of the sensualist,

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nor the wanton mirth of the unthinking multitude. It is not drawn, as worldly joy is, from vain perishing things, but from the word of God, which standeth fast for ever. It fprings from the revelation of grace and mercy in Jesus, and from giving credit to it. Whoever honors its testimony, as the truth of God, will be convinced, that he trusting to the atonement of Jesus shall never perish, and trusting to the righteousness of Jesus shall have everlasting life. Hence come joy and peace in believing. The conscience is reconciled to God, and is at peace. The heart is made fenfible of the love of God, and rejoices in him. This was the experience of the sweet singer of Israel in the xxxiii Pfalm: " Our heart " shall rejoice in the Lord, BECAUSE " wehavetrusted in his holy name."

This

This is a good reason. Whoever trufts in God will certainly rejoice in God: For by trusting in his word, and by depending upon his faithfulness, he cannot be disappointed of the good things, which God has promifed. We have an instance of this in a trembling despairing sinner, who had drawn his dagger, and was plunging it into his heart. In that moment he heard of Jesus. It was given him to feel his want of a Saviour-Sirs, fays he to Paul and Silas, what must I do to be faved? And they faid, Believe in the name of the Lord Jefus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they preached unto him the word of the Lord. and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was baptifed, he and all his straightstraightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and REJOICED BELIEVING. O what a happy change was here, and made by believing! The felf-murderer forgets his bloody defign, and drops his dagger. He hears of a pardon and believes. His black despair gives way to sweet peace in God. His misery ends in the knowlege of a joyful salvation. How bleffed are they that believe! God has pronounced them, and God will make them bleffed. There is no misery deserved, but by faith they are faved from it; and no good promised, but by faith they may now enjoy it: They have therefore all the reason to rejoice, that any person can have on this side of heaven. For

Thirdly, This joy is distinguished from the vain joy of the world, by

its author. It is the gift of God. It is one of the graces of the Spirit of God. St. Paul fays, " The " fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, &c .- love to God, and then rejoicing in God. When the Spirit of adoption enters into any heart he manifests by believing the love of the Father, and thereby excites in it holy joy. He comes to make the foul happy in its return to God. It is the very end for which he is fent from the Father and the Son, and therefore it is called the joy of the holy Ghost. It is his fruit, produced by his influence, and kept by his power. It is like himfelf, of a spiritual and heavenly nature -a pure affection-in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He refines it from creature delight, and exalts it above fenfual pleasure: For it is the result of nearness to God,

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God, and the effect of fellowship with him: Which is

Fourthly, Another bleffed ingredient in the joy of believers. It has God for its object. It is joy in God, as their God, their supreme good, known, believed in, and enjoyed. The holy Spirit has confecrated their hearts for fellowship with him. He has brought a free pardon for past apostacy, and full power to dethrone creature-love: And he abides in their hearts to fubdue it. He enlightens their understandings to see the vanity of the creature, and the fulness of God, and he enables them to reject every thing, that promises them happiness, if they cannot enjoy God in it. Thus he keeps their hearts chast and fixed upon God. Their joy becomes simple, as their faith is: For this looks at the finished falvation, falvation, and resting intirely upon it sees God perfectly reconciled; thereby it lays a sure foundation for their joy in God: Because they now know him by faith to be their God, and can see their interest in all the blessings of his love in Jesus. This is the fountain head of joy, from whence slow rivers of pleasure for evermore. The nearer they live to the fountain head, the more communion they have with God: Their hearts become purer and holier, and their joys are more spiritual and heavenly.

This is the only remedy for the miseries, with which the world abounds. Men are uneasy: seek for joy: and cannot find it: because they seek where it is not. They go to broken eisterns, which cannot hold it. They are disappointed, and wonder. But still go on, spend-

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spending their days in this vain purfuit. They do not attain any true joy. It flies from them, and at last they lie down in forrow. What thanks then art thou bound, O my foul, to return unto thy God, who has faved thee from this delution! What a mercy is it, that thou haft been led to the fountain of joy! O live near it, and from it derive all thy streams. Seek them all in God. And feek them in faith upon the warrant of the divine promise. He has faid, "The meek shall increase "their joy in the Lord"—they shall have it and increase it. The more meek and lowly thou art, the more wilt thou be joyful in God. Pray then for growing humility, that thou mayest experience the fweetness of this scripture-" Re-" joice in the Lord always, and " again I say, rejoice"—there is always

ways matter of joy in the Lord. What a fulness did he find, who testifies of it thus-" My joy shall " be in the Lord—God is the glad-" ness of my joy-all my springs " are in thee-for thou art my ex-"ceeding joy." Happy prince! All his fprings came from God and led him to God. He did not draw his happiness from the brooks, but from the fountain. The brooks drie up, but the fountain cannot. He did not rejoice in his crown and dignity, in his victories and treafures, or in any worldly good. He enjoyed God in them, who was the joy of his heart. He only valued the gifts, for the fake of the giver: for he made use of them by faith; and then they were the means of bringing him near to God, and of keeping up communion with God. Whatever does this is a great

great bleffing. And every thing should do this to a believer. While he lives, like a child of God, he exercises his faith for spirituals and temporals; and his heavenly Father blesses him according to his word, wherein he hath caused him to put his trust, and gives him continual matter for joy and thankfulness.

This is the portion of the Lord's people. He has entailed it on them. It comes to them by inheritance. And thou art bound, O my foul, to make use of it. Thy duty and interest call upon thee to enjoy much of it. Thy gratitude for the exceeding great mercies of the Father's love cannot be so properly shewn, as by rejoicing in him: for the thankful heart cannot but be joyful. It feels happy in God. My meditation of him, says a grateful soul, shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord.

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Lord. This is a just tribute, which the Father expects, and which the holy Spirit enables his children to return him. "Bleffed is the peo-" ple that know the joyful found, " they shall walk, O Lord, in the " light of thy countenance: IN THY " NAME shall they rejoice all the "day, and in thy righteousness " shall they be exalted." These are great privileges, which God has promised and does bestow upon his people. It is true, they do not all alike rejoice with great joy; but they all ought. When their faith is weak, their joy is little. But they have the same right to believe, and to rejoice in believing. There is the same provision made for the whole family and houshold of faith. They are interested in the same covenant, have the same promifes, and the fame faithfulness to make

make them good. They have perfect fecurity given them, that they may trust, and not be afraid. The people, who know the joyful found of a free grace falvation, have good reason to believe without doubt or wavering. By fuch a faith they will fee God perfectly reconciled to them, and will behold the light of his countenance shining on them in love. A bleffed fight! To fee it clearly is glory begun, to walk in it is glory increasing. What is it but heaven, to rejoice all the day long? But then it must be IN THY' NAME, in the incarnate word, in Jehovah Jesus; by faith in whose righteousness they shall be exalted, as high as a creature can be-being justified freely and fully they have access into this perfect grace wherein they stand, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God: Vol. II. and

and not only so, but they rejoice in the way to glory, in tribulations also, knowing that all things are working together for their present, and for their eternal enjoyment of God.

For their encouragement thus to rejoice in the Lord he has promised them, that the joy which he gives shall not be taken away, which is

Fifthly, Another great privilege. True joy is the gift of God. Is a grace of the Spirit of God. It has God for its author, and God for its object: and it has this prerogative annexed to it, that no one can destroy this gift of grace. The Lord Christ declares, that he will not suffer any creature to take away what he bestows. What a rich cordial was this to his dejected apostles? They were mourning upon account of his leaving them and were

were fadly cast down, as men without hope. But he revives their drooping hearts with a promife-"I will see you again, and your " heart shall rejoice, and your joy " no man taketh from you." This is indeed strong consolation: for it is one of the flreams, which maketh glad the city of God—a stream that never fails-it runs out of the ocean of free grace, and none can stop its running back into it. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you, fays Jesus. The world giveth empty joys, continueth them by an uncertain tenure, at last takes away all its gifts, and leaves its deluded votary to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Whereas Christ gives what is truly good, folid, and lasting. His gifts are without repentance. He is of one mind in continuing, as well as in giving: for his

his motives are in and of himself, and always the same. His own mere love, his free grace, and the good pleasure of his own will difpose him to give and to continue his favors: and his one end is his own glory. Therefore he will not take away the joy, which he has given, and he will fuffer no one to take it away: He secures by his power, what he gives by his love. Such is the believer's right to rejoice in the Lord always. His title is indefeasible. God has freely given him in Christ all the good that can make him happy: and he enjoys it, and is happy, fo far as he lives by faith. While he goes on from faith to faith his joys increase. Growing faith brings him in a richer harvest of joy. And he is commanded still to proceed, until his joy be full, which is a

Sixth,

Sixth privilege, peculiar to joy in God. Other springs fail. They are often dry. And when they run the fullest, he that drinks of their water thirsts the more. But joy in God has a fatisfying fulness. The fountain is always full, yea is always running over: and all the streams bring happy peace, and holy joy. The more a man drinks thereof the more fober and spiritual he becomes: for whatever flows out of this fountain is grace, fanctifying grace; the more we partake of it, we grow more like it. There is in it the divine property of conforming and affimilating us to itfelf: for it weakens the corruption of nature, and strengthens the faculties of the new-man, and as these grow stronger, they cleave closer to God, and have more fellowship By which means they with him. B 3 partake

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partake more of his joy. A happy partaker of it declares-" In thy " presence is the fulness of joy," and therefore he prays-" Make " me full of joy with thy counte-" nance"—the presence of God with me, and hisloving countenance shining upon me is the fullest joy upon earth. And this comes from the grace of the holy Spirit, and is received by faith. Our Lord fays to his disciples-" These things " have I spoken unto you, that my " joy might remain in you, and " that your joy might be full." His end in speaking was to give them good reason to rejoice, and to continue rejoicing, and if they received what he spake with full affurance, as they ought to do, it would produce in them a fulness of joy. And this would be fo much to his honor, and to their profit, that he commands commands them to ask it of the Father in his name-" Ask, and ye " shall receive, that your joy may " be full." To the same purpose the apostle John, treating of the person of God incarnate, through whom we have fellowship with the Father in all the bleffings of his love, fays, "Thefe things write " we unto you, that your joy may " be full." His design in writing was to lead them to nearer fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and to stir them up to seek in it their fulness of joy: and they have it full, who satisfied of their title to the Father's bleffings are receiving them freely out of the Son's fulness by the grace of the Spirit. It becometh them well to rejoice: for in the same blessings there is fulness of joy for evermore, joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

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Put all these considerations together, and then fee, O my foul, what a rich provision thy God has made for the joy of thy heart. Admire and adore him for his great falvation, for delivering thee from fin and forrow, and for the free gift of righteoufness and life eternal. To pardon, to justify, to glorify such an one, as thou art, O what divine and infinite grace! What wilt thou return him for manifesting his love to thee, and for engaging thy love to him? How great is thy debt for admitting thee to fellowship with him, as thy God and Father, and for the gracious communications of his love to thee in Jesus! What a subject is here before thee for delightful praise! Look at it in any true light, thou hast reason to be glad with exceeding great joy. God, the infinite fountain of good,

is thy God. He rejoices in thee, therefore thou shouldest rejoice in He has loved thee freely: how canst thou be sensible of this without loving him? His love has bleffed thee with all fpiritual bleffings in Christ Jesus; whilst thou art receiving them out of his fulness, how canst thou refuse to thank him with joyful lips? He fays, that he rejoices over thee to do thee good; the belief of this should fill thy heart with joy and gladness. Indeed there is nothing in God, but what should be to thee matter of rejoicing. His faithfulness and justice are on thy fide, as well as his never failing compassions: for he is thy God, thy covenant God, he has given his Son for thee and his Spirit to thee: by his grace thou hast been called to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son, and

B 5

to partake of their covenant bleffings. It is thy privilege to be improving this fellowship, and even upon earth to be tasting of the joys of heaven. May thy faith bring thee in a rich feast, yea a fulness of joy, till thy cup run over with the rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right-hand for evermore.

Remember, O my foul, it is thy duty and thy privilege thus to rejoice in God. It is thine interest, and thy happiness. Thy God requires it of thee, as the grateful acknowlegement of his favors: They are all of grace, inestimably rich and everlasting. He would have thee to honor him for the gifts by rejoicing in the giver. Joy is the sense of his goodness to thee: and canst thou receive the present, and live in hopes of the eternal blessings of his goodness, and yet be without a joyful

joyful sense of them? Examine well, and try thyfelf. How is thy heart? Is it happy in God? Is it happy in nothing but God? Whatever a man puts his trust in, from that he expects his happiness. In what then doit thou trust? Certainly thou wilt say, my trust is in the mercy of God for ever and ever. And should not he be the only matter of thy joy, who is the only ground of thy faith? If he be, then why art thou so often cast down, O my foul, and why art thou fo difquieted within me? How many dejections, what great forrows, and what frequent heaviness dost thou experience. From whence come they? Joy is fown for thee. The fower is the Son of man. The Father has promifed it, and bestowed it on thee for thy portion: thou hast been called by grace, and the Joy

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joy in believing is thy birth-right. What is the reason thou art not happy in thy God, and rejoicing in him always? Search diligently for the cause. Depend upon it there is a great mistake somewhere. The scriptures cannot be broken, which treat of continual joy in God. The promises cannot fail. The promiser is faithful: And yet thou art not always a partaker of the promised grace. How is this? O try to come to the bottom of this error. May the Spirit of wisdom lay it open to thee, and may thy forrow be turned into joy.

Perhaps thou art seeking for some reason to rejoice in thyself. This rejoicing is not good, although it be very common. It has a bad motive: it comes from pride. The end is bad: it is to exalt and aggrandize SELF, which was man's

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fin and ruin. It is forbidden in scripture-He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord. If thou couldst find fomething in thyfelf to be pleased with, thou wouldst then rejoice in thy pride. Sorrow for not finding it may bring thee right; because it may be the means of shewing thee, that thou hast nothing of thine own to look at with felf-complacency. What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why wouldst thou glory, as if thou hadft not received it? Hast thou any thing of thine own but fin? Who gave thee grace, and made thee to differ from others? Was it not God? Did not all come from the good pleafure of his own will? He faw nothing good in thee at first to move him to be gracious, and what he continues is to the praise of the glory of his own grace.

grace. If thou hast lost the fight of these truths, no wonder thou shouldst go mourning. God will not vouchfafe his joy to them, who facrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag. He humbles, and fills the humbled with good things, but he fendeth the rich empty away. The rich rob him of his glory, and he refuses them his grace. Watch therefore over thy proud legal heart. Be jealous over it with a godly jealoufy. And intreat the holy Spirit to bring down every high thought in it, that thou mayest exalt God, and he may exalt thee. Remember the promise-"The meek shall increase " their joy in the Lord:" feek the fulfilling of this: for joy in him is the death of felf-feeking and felfpleasing. O beg of God then to keep thee meek and lowly, that thou

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thou mayest be willing to live upon Jesus by faith, and to receive all thy joys out of his fulness of joy.

Perhaps thou art mourning under a fense of thy finful nature, and groaning under the burden of indwelling fin, as holy Paul did, and as all the dear children of God do, when they are in their right mind. This is godly forrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. It is the true poverty of spirit, to which the Lord hath promised his bleffing. Indeed every one that has it is bleffed, because it is not only confistent with the truest joy, but also is the very proper temper of mind, in which it is preferved and increased. They that fow in tears shall reap in joy. Self knowlege is the breaking up of the fallow ground, and is the ploughing and harrowing of it, thereby mak-

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ing it fit for the good feed, and to receive the enlivening influences of the heavens. The more any man knows of himself, the greater reafon will he have to feek the harvest of his joys in God, and feeking by faith he will find them. If he be in the deepest humiliation, he will be then best disposed to rejoice in God. This holy joy generally rifes highest, when self is lowest: as the highest tide is always after the lowest ebb. Remember this, O my foul, in the most abasing views of thy fallen nature, and it will lead thee to feek, and in believing to find that in God, which thou hast not in thyself. The empty, and none but the empty, may be filled with his joy. Let every discovery of thine emptiness lead thee to trust more in the falvation of God, and to enjoy more of its bleffings. And then

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ways forrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrow for self is the greatest friend to joy in God. Self-loathing is accompanied with the sweetest delight in God. May the apostle's experience herein be thine—"We" are of the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no considence in the sless. O pray for the same grace, and thou wilt find, that the less considence there is in the sless, the more rejoicing there will be in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps thou hast been tempted to seek for joy in some creature comfort, and hast not received it as the gift of God, nor enjoyed it by saith, nor returned him his glory. Thou wast looking below God for happiness, and expecting it from some other object. The world had

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herein ensnared thy heart. There is not a greater enemy to the children of God: because it has objects fuited to their fenses, and capable of gratifying them: by which the world is always trying to engage their affections, and always fucceeds, when they are not living by the faith of the Son of God: for this is the only victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. See, whether thy forrow did not fpring from fome worldly difappointment. Thou hadst dropt thy shield, and wast falling asleep in Dalilah's lap: but awaking didst find the pleasure turned into pain. This pain may be very profitable. It should convince thee of thy dreadful mistake in leaving God for the world, and should stop up thy way for the future. Now thou feest the need of being cautioned— Love

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: for all things out of Christ are under the carfe. There can be no bleffedness in them. The whole world lieth in wickedness: it cannot make thee happy, any more than hell can. But it is thy privilege to be delivered from this present evil world, and to be faved from the love of it. This is a bleffed part of thy falvation. Expect it by faith. The victory is obtained; feek thy share in it. "I have overcome the "world," fays Jesus. Almighty Lord, overcome it in me, as thou hast overcome it for me.

But remember, O my foul, whatever be the real cause of thy sorrowing, there is joy in God, and for thee: because he is thy God; in whom there is nothing to make thee sorrowful, but every thing which

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which can possibly give thee true joy. (The blessed Trinity are in covenant for thee and for thy falvation. And it is thy bounden duty trusting to the finished work of the Son to rejoice in the love of the Father. In the peace of thy conscience and in the love of thy heart thou art required to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to be always giving thanks to the holy Spirit for this fellowship. Every enjoyment of their (covenant) bleffings in earth is a foretast of heaven, and a pledge of joy unspeakable. What thou hast now by faith, thou shall certainly have in everlasting possession: for there is a fure foundation laid in the covenant) for thee to build thy hopes upon of rejoicing evermore. Thy Father has chosen thee and accepted thee in his Son. He has fet his heart

heart upon doing thee good, and he changeth not. His loving kindness is like himself. He has drawn thee by his Spirit to believe in his love, and he has promifed to love thee unto the end. He has freely given thee all spiritual bleffings in Christ Jesus, and he reserves the full enjoyment of them for heaven. Nothing can rob thee of them: because he keeps them by his power for thee, and thee for them. should this help to fill up the meafure of thy joys? The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort is thine, with all that his love can do to make thee happy. canst thou want, but more faith? The Lord increase it, that thy heart and conversation may be more with As thine affections are fet more on things above, the temptations

tions to the love of the things below will we weakened. The fweetness of heavenly communion will deaden thee to the charms of the world: yea, the world will be to thee as nothing, while God is ALL. And is he not all in all to thee? Consider his nature, his personality, (his covenant, his works, his graces and his bleffings-view them in their greatness and goodness-thou hast an interest in them all. His wisdom contrives for thee—his providence watches over thee - his love waits to be gracious to thee his holiness and justice and truth are thy friends—all his attributes have engaged his power to bring thee to glory. The perfect falvation of Jesus is thine. His Father is thy Father in him, and has nothing in his heart but love to thee: the holy Spirit has manifested it

to thee in believing to be a perfect unchangeable and everlasting love. Whatever the Godhead has promised to give of happiness is promised to thee: And thou dost believe it, although thou art sometimes in heaviness through manifold temptations. But even then there is joy laid up for thee in God. Joy enough in the fountain. It is always full: Only thy faith draws out of it sparingly. Enough in God to turn thy forrow into joy, if faith did its perfect work. O for more faith, that thou mayest have more joy in believing.

From whatever cause then, O my soul, thy sorrow arose, it certainly did not spring from any thing, which saith discovered to be in God. Be assured of this: And learn to improve thy sorrow about other things, so as to see thy need of trust-

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ing more and of rejoicing more in God. If thy forrow be lawful, coming from a fight and fense of thy finfulness, there is good reason thou shouldest abhor thyself and repent in dust and ashes: But this is also a good reason for joy in thy God: Because the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and faveth fuch as be of a contrite spirit. He gives to them the knowlege of falvation, and makes them glad with the joy of his countenance. Thus he delivers them from their fins and forrows. He continues his loving kindness: Surely his goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their lives. When they are under temptations to feek for joy in other things, he hedges up their way that they cannot attain the expected good; or if they do, he embitters the enjoyment

ment, and will not let them find any thing in the creature, but vanity and vexation. By which means he would teach them to derive all their joys from him, and from nothing but him. Wait, O my foul, and read, and hear, and pray, be diligent in all means for thine improvement in this divine leffon. Seek the presence of God, whereever thou art. Expect his bleffing upon all that thou doest. Account his love thy chief happiness, and be fure, nothing can make thee happy, in which thou canst not enjoy his love. If riches increase, the world smiles, health be granted thee, relations are kind, and all things go well, fet not thy heart upon them. Look at the bountiful hand which gives, and depend on the grace, which fanctifies those things. They are not worth having, VOL. II. but

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but as they come from, and lead to, God, and fo may be spiritually improved. If thou canst live by faith, and enjoy God in them, then they are real bleffings: for then thou wilt receive them as his gifts and use them to his praise; thou wilt eye his goodness in them, and admire him for them. And while he continues them, thou wilt be dependent on his grace to keep thy heart from idolatry, that thou mayest love the gifts, only for the sake of the giver. Whatever thou art going to do, ask thyself-How can this be the means of my rejoicing in God? If it cannot, avoid it. If it come with all the world's flatteries, and make thee the greatest offers of joy, fly from it. There is deadly poison under its guilded out-Lay it down as an invariable rule of thy walk, that nothing can

do thee good, but what thou canst enjoy God in. He is the only source of good. And every thing is to thee what he makes it: not what it is in itself; as such, all is vanity. But it is good, when God makes it so. True joy is from him, and in him. It is the gift of his grace, and does not stop at any of the streams, but goes up to the sountain-head, from whence they slow, and there-finds its comforts. O my God, teach me thus to seek my joys in thee, and to make thee my crown of rejoicing.

For thine encouragement confider, O my foul, what he did to the travellers gone before thee in the way to Sion: how he comforted them and made them glad with the joy of his countenance. He led them indeed through the valley of Baca, of mourning—the only high way

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to the kingdom; but they found a wellinit, a fountain of living waters: they went on forrowing for their departure from God, but were made glad at their hearts in being brought back by his grace: therefore they wept rejoicing. Happy mourners! And hast thou not the same reason, as they had, to forrow for thyfelf, and yet to be exceeding glad in God? Isnot this also the case with all thy fellow travellers now upon the road? Their hearts are with God. He is their portion. His heaven is their home. They would not make up their happiness in the accommodations by the way, but in God, their treasure, their supreme good, and their everlasting joy. Neither would they be stopt by the inconveniencies, which they may meet with: thefe, improved by faith, will tend to make them long more

more to be at home: for these will lead them to feel more of the true joy there is in God, and will thereby inspire them with higher strains of praise and thankfulness. So that every thing they meet with on the road will be fanctified to them, and will dispose them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Their Father and our Father out of the riches of his grace has not only given them matter of thanks, but has also provided the very words to be used by them. Many a weary traveller has found them a rich cordial. His spirits have been raised, his foul and all within made happy, while he was finging the sweet and heavenly hymn. The gospel prophet, who had feen the glory of Immanuel, and who was the honored penman of this divine poem, has left us a direction, when any

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one has a right to fing it, and to make it his own, Ifa. xii. 1. And in that day thou shalt say. By looking at the context the time here mentioned appears to be the day of the Lord's power, when the Spirit of life enters into the finner, and he is quickened from a death in trespasses and fins. A happy, eternally happy day. The same Spirit will be his comforter; will bring him to the knowlege of his falvation through faith in the gloriously complete work of Immanuel, by which he shall find himself freed from guilt and fear, and in Jesus made a partaker of grace and glory. Then the joy of the Holy Ghost is felt in his foul, and his heart is in tune to bless the Lord his God-O Lord I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold,

Behold, God is my falvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jebovah is my strength and my song, be also is become my falvation: therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. These wells are the fountains of grace, from which the heavenly travellers draw their holy comforts, and with which refreshed they go on from strength to strength, praising Jehovah and ascribing to him all the glory of their falvation. He was angry with them, and justly. The fire of his wrath might have burnt to the lowest hell: and his law, his justice, his holiness, and his truth would have been glorified for ever in their destruction. But admired be his mercy, adored be his fovereign grace, he himself found out a way to magnify every divine attribute in their falvation. This was the C 4

the wonderful contrivance of the Three in covenant.) The Father accepted his co-equal Son in the place of his people, and his obedience unto death in their flead: He is now perfectly reconciled unto them in Jesus: His anger is turned away from them. And when it is given unto them to know it: and they receive the comfort of it, when they have joy and peace in believing, O what a day of light and glory then breaks in upon their fouls—a day fometimes clouded with the rifing mists and vapors of the body of fin, but often fo bright and ferene, that the warm beams of the fun of righteousness shine directly into their hearts. These are times of great refreshing from the prefence of the Lord. The communications of his love are then felt with pure delight: and the foul

is made sensible, that it is in Jesus an happy partaker of the fulness of joy. The man cannot contain his mighty bliss; but breaks out aloud into thanks, and calls upon the bystanders to admire the marvellous goodness of God. Behold, see here a miracle of grace-God is my falvation-wonder with me at the exceeding riches of this love-Why me! What am I, that the most high God should be my Savidur? I am fure he never fet his love upon one more unworthy, nor plucked any brand out of the burning, that was fitter fewel for hell fire. O help me then, angels and men, to praise and adore that infinite mercy, which contrived, wrought out, and has now applied to me this falvation with all its bleffings. My debt increases, and I want to praise him more: for in that unspeakable gift of of his Son he gave me all things, and he has now given me faith, and has put me in possession. I have his word for it, and I believe ita word of infallible truth, confirmed by promise, ratified by the covenant oath of the bleffed Trinity. These engagements cannot be broken, therefore I will trust and not be afraid. On the part of the divine covenanters all is fure. They have given me the fullest security, that can be, and I may take the comfort of it. They will never leave me nor forfake me, and my faith shall not fail. Blessed promise! I shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto falvation. Glory be to the Lord Jehovah, who is my frength-his almighty arm holds me up, and therefore be is my fong -the same arm will carry me safe to the end, therefore my heart rejoiceth

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joiceth in him, and with my fong will I praise him. I will make my boast of his strength. All the day long will I be telling of his falvation. How can I mention too often these infinite mercies of my God? I love to dwell on the delightful theme. It warms my heart, it inflames mine affections, and raises my soul to heaven. My joys are all in this one—He also is become my salvation: He is my prefent falvation: for he has opened the fountain, and has opened my heart to receive the life-giving streams. How can I but bless and adore his holy name, while I am with joy drawing water out of the wells of salvation.

O ye bleffed of the Lord, who have received the same salvation out of the infinite sountain of divine

grace,

grace, affist me to praise. Your rejoicing with me will increase my jeys, and improve my thankfulness. So it follows in the prophet-In that day shall YE say-YE, not one only as before; but the many partakers of the fame mercies will fing in chorus. They will join in focial worship and with one heart unite in the common tribute of praise. Praise ye the Lord, call upon bis name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted: fing unto the Lord: for be bath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and Sout thou inhabitant of Sion: for great is the holy One of Ifrael in the midst of thee. Great he is indeed, infinitely-everlastingly great in himself-and to be admired for his excellent greatness in saving grade, finners.

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finners. This is his greatest work, and it demands of them their highest praise: and they are glad to give it him. Happy are they now, when humble and poor in spirit they can exalt their Saviour God: but who can tell, how happy they shall be, when he shall exalt them, and make them partakers of his own happiness? Eternal salvation will demand the tribute of their eternal praise; and they will be most blessedly employed in paying it, when they shall return to Sion with fongs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Crowned heads may well fing: for their coronation day will last for ever, and the king of kings will put fuch honor upon his royal friends, that all heaven will ring with his praises. They will with one heart and one voice adore God the the lamb; whose gracious hand wiped away all tears from their eyes, and made sorrow and sighing slee away for ever; and who gave them his joy and gladness, such as are even in heaven inexpressible, and will be to eternity full of

glory.

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O my God, accept of my poor mite. I defire to join all the redeemed in earth and heaven in bleffing and praising thee at all times. I would give thee praise continually with my heart and with my mouth. I would rejoice in thee, and in nothing but thee: for thou art my God, my supreme good, and mine everlasting portion. Let me then for thy mercies sake glory in praising thee henceforth and for ever. I ascribe it to thee now with a glad heart, rejoicing in hope, that

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my praise will be better e'er long and never ceasing. Thou art worthy of all that angels and men can pay: to thee, holy Father, with the Son and Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah be equal and endless praise. To this I give my hearty Amen.

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CHAP. VIII.

The believer walks humbly with God bearing his cross.

HE happy believer is now advanced a great way in his journey. He has been brought to the faving knowlege of God-has received faith in his reconciled God in Jesus-has been taught by the Spirit to love his God—and has found the bleffedness of holy communion with him in the way of obedience and duty, which makes him goon rejoicing; then it is become fit and proper, that his faith and love should be tried. He must expect it. It is to the honor of God, to the good of others, and to the establishing of those graces, that proof

proof should be made of them, and that they should be put, like gold, into the furnace. This is only a refiner's fire. If the furnace be very hot, one seven times more than it was wont to be heated, the gold will lofe nothing. Sterling grace is purer and brighter for every fiery trial. Its enemies, who blow the flame, have no intention to refine it, and sometimes the believer himself cannot see how the means will answer the end: But God overrules every trial for his glory, and the believer's good, and makes it more precious, than that of gold which perisheth. Troubles, oppofition from within and from without, all the difficulties he can meet with, only serve to purge out his drofs, and to render him more fit for his heavenly walk. Herein the grace of God is most marvellous. Such

Such a power, as brought light out of darkness, is continually directing and sanctifying the crosses of the believer, so that not one of them can stop him; nay the greatest of them, help him forward in his journey, and bring him not only more safely, but also more happily to the end of it. Adored for ever be the Father's love, which makes all things work together for his childrens good.

When man was in paradife, there was nothing in him but what was conformed to the image of God. His will was one with the will of God. In this state there was no cross. Harmony ruled in the innocent breast. And God looked on his favourite man with delight. They were perfectly agreed, and they walked together in holy and happy friendship. But when man fell,

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fell, then fin brought in forrow, in the ten thousand miseries which the body fuffers, and in the entire corruption of the faculties of the foul, particularly of the will, now at enmity with the will of God. Hence our croffes. Sin is their fruitful parent; and while we are in a body of fin and of death, we cannot be exempt from fuffering: For man is born to trouble, as naturally as the sparks fly upwards; but the unregenerate man does not feel the cause of this. He has no spiritual fenses. He is dead to God. He does not know, why he fuffers, and he is not sensible of what he deferves to fuffer, therefore he goes on merrily, laughing and finging under a load of guilt, enough to ruin a thousand worlds. But when the spirit of life enters into him, and he is made to fee his state, to feel his his guilt, and to fear his danger, then he begins to groan under the cross. Every day he discovers, how totally he was fallen, and departed in heart from the living God. now tasts the bitterness of sin, and finds the deadly fruits of it. Altho' there be a remedy provided to bring the wanderers home, and he is made acquainted with it, yet he is without strength to apply it. He cannot by believing take the comfort of it. When it is given him to believe, he still has fin and fuffering to exercise his faith. Against his corruptions and temptations he must be continually fighting the good fight of faith. From this warfare he can have not discharge, but by death. He must take to himself the whole armor of God, and be under arms night and day, or he will never be able to refift the affaults

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affaults of evil spirits, or to overcome the opposition of evil men. This is the heritage of all the fervants of the Lord. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If they be on the Lord's fide, all his enemies will certainly be theirs; so that if they enter into his kingdom, it must be through much tribulation. The king himself went this way to the crown, bearing his cross; and he has affured us there is no other way-" Whosoever doth not bear "his cross, and come after me, " CANNOT be my disciple"-he must deny himself what by nature he loves, and must love what by nature he hates, unless he live in this state of felf-denial, which is to be his daily cross, he cannot live in communion with me, as one of my disciples. If he be one of the highest

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highest of them, yet he must carry his cross: for he has still a fallen nature, and its fenses and appetites are always lusting against the will of God, and it is like plucking out a right eye to deny them their gratifications and to refuse them their much coveted pleafures. He is in a body of fin and death, and must carry his cross to his grave, being liable to all the fufferings, which mortality is heir to, and all the way mortified under them, because he cannot bear them without faith, nor hold out without patience, and these graces are not of himself, but are the gift of God. He is also forced to carry another cross all his days, even the corruption of his nature, depraved in every faculty, and always enclined to evil. This is the burden and grief of the children of God, under which they

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they all groan. And a fore and heavy burden it is, heavier for being continual, and for its always working against the grace and glory of the Lord Christ: for this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, and appears in nothing more, than in their adulterous love to their own righteoufness, of which they are so doteingly fond, that after the holy Spirit has divorced them from it, and their maker is become their hufband, even the Lord their RIGHTEousness, yet still an unlawful attachment to their own righteousness remains, and is the cause of the greatest crosses and of the heaviest trials they meet with in their way to heaven.

Hence the cross becomes necesfary for the whole nature of fallenman, for body and soul. The sensual

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fual appetites are continually feeking their gratification in unlawful things, and the spiritual faculties are full of blind pride, and felf righteousness, and know no way to the divine favor, but by their own works and goodness. The cross is indispensably needful to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and to crucify the vanity of the mind, that when it would glory, it may have nothing left to glory in, but the Lord. In this light let us confider the infinite love, which appointed the outward cross for the outward man, and the inward cross for the inward man, and let us fee, how by each of them communion with God is preserved, and the believer is helped forward in his bleffed journey.

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grace, and reader the cross he en-

CHAP. IX.

The believer exercised with the outward cross carries it with patience, and finds it a great help to him in his walk heavenwards.

TE call that a cross, which opposes our will. This opposition renders it painful and grievous. A very little matter, the least trifle, becomes a great cross, when our will is fet much against it. How then can the believer rejoice with an heavy cross upon his back? Or how can he rejoice all his days, if he must carry it to his grave? The bleffed gospel discovers how this may be, and the bleffed Spirit gives the experience of it: for he continues to teach the doctrines of VOL. II. grace,

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grace, and under the cross he enforces them. What has been treated of in the former chapters he now applies with life and power. The doctrines are put to the trial, and it appears that they are of God: for none could produce the effects which follow upon believing them, but an almighty arm. Faith is tried in the fire, and the believer is convinced it is the faith of God's elect: for the promise is made good -" When thou walkest through "the very fire thou shalt not be " burnt, neither shall the flame "kindle upon thee." His love to his reconciled God is put into the fiery furnace, and it comes out, like the three children, fenfible their God had been with them in the furnace, and their God had brought them out; for which marvellous instances of his love to them, their love

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love was increased to him. This is God's way. He gives grace, and then tries it. When he has enabled the finner by believing to find peace and love, then he would improve those graces by daily exercife, and if the exercise of them be very sharp and afflicting, it is only to establish the trust of his heart, and to confirm the affection of his foul more perfectly in his God. His God. Mind that. His God still. The cross is not sent to weaken that relation. He is the same tender Father to his children, when he puts it upon them, as when he takes it off: and he would have them by faith to experience it. While they depend on his being perfectly reconciled to them through the obedience and facrifice of Immanuel, they will see the same paternal affection invariably fet upon them, D 2 and

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and always disposed to do them good. His love changeth not. The happy objects of it have given this glorious testimony, even when under his cross-" WE KNOW that all "things work together for good" —they found it so. Whatever he fent to them came with a meffage of his love. "Hear ye the rod, "and him that fent it." They hear what he fays by it, for it speaks of the Father's love, and the belief of this quiets their minds under the stroke of his rod. Thus it answers his purpose - This cometh not forth of the dust, but is appointed for me; my Father sent it, not in anger for the punishment of my fins, but in the tenderness of his affection-He is not dealing with me as the supreme disposer of all events, who may afflict and justly his rebel creatures according to his fovereign

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fovereign will; but he has fent me this affliction with a message of grace and peace—I know it is well ordered—I kiss the rod, and I bless him that fent it.

The apostle Paul uses this argument to the fuffering Hebrews. They had endured a long and great fight of afflictions. They had need of patience: He therefore gives them in the xith chapter a short history of the Lord's favorites, and shews that they all carried his cross, and that he supported them all under it: Yea gave them strength to run their race, till every one of them won the prize: Then he requires them to look to Jesus, the greatest sufferer, out of whose fulness they might receive faith to run, and patience happily to finish the fame race. And least they should be weary through suffering long,

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or faint in their minds under hard fuffering, he reminds them of the character of their heavenly Father, who dut of the tenderest love appointed their crosses:-" Have ye "forgotten the exhortation, fays " the apostle, in which your Father " speaketh unto you as unto chil-"dren? My son, despise not thou " the chastening of the Lord, nor " faint when thou art rebuked of " him: For whom the Lord loveth " he chasteneth, and scourgeth e-" very fon whom he receiveth. If " ye endure chastening God deal-" eth with you as with fons: For " what fon is he whom the Father "chasteneth not? But if ye be " without chastisement, whereof "ALL are partakers, then are ye " baftards and not fons." O what a bleffed exhortation! How full of love—the love of God the Father love

-love to his child, who wants correction—love that would not touch him with the rod, till he had most tenderly informed him of his gracious purpose: My son, my beloved, this chastening is from thy Father. It was determined for thee by covenant love, and fettled upon thee for thy portion in the great charter of heaven. All thy croffes were then mercifully appointed - their weight and measure—how long how great - how many - what strength was needful to bear them -what comforts under them-and what holy fruits should be produced by them—all was fixed by love, is now given in love, and is to bring thee to greater enjoyment of my love. My dear child, despise not then my chastening, nor faint when I rebuke thee. Be affured, it is for thy good. There is a needs must. It is so neceffary, D 4

ceffary, that I cannot love thee without chastening thee, nor receive thee among mine adopted without fcourging thee. See then, how thou takest my correction. Look at thy temper and behaviour under it. Examine. Art thou patient? Not fuffering merely, but fuffering quietly is the proof of thine adoption-If ye ENDURE chastening-If when I afflict, thou canst possess thy soul in patience under mine afflicting hand, then I deal with thee as with fons-I give thee thy portion of fuffering, and I give thee thy portion of grace to bear it. All my children want correcting, and they all have it: for what fon is he whom the Father chasteneth not? They are all fufferers. Mine only begotten was the greatest. None of you can fuffer, as he did: But whoever is following him must share with him

him in his cross, and bear it after him. If any be without my chastisement, whereof all mine are partakers: If they cannot bear it, have not faith to receive my loving correction, and therefore no patience to wait the blessed issue of it, such do not belong to my family; they are none of mine; they are bastards, and not sons.

How should the argument in this scripture reconcile the believer to suffering? How easy, yea how happy, should it make him under the cross? He suffers, but it is from his Father, who in most perfect love and infinite wisdom appointed the cross, and appointed also the precious fruits, which it should produce. O my soul, keep this in mind. Remember whose cross thou art carrying. Thy Father contrived it. He sent, and continues it that it

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may work under him for the best. It is the chastening of his richest love. Receive it then patiently, thankfully at his hands, and thou wilt find it full of bleffings. But take heed, how thou confulteft fense or carnal reason. These are always enemies to the cross: for they judge of it only by feeling, and always refuse to believe what God says concerning it. Adhere to the truth: And reject every fuggestion, which would infinuate to thee, that there is any thing but love in the chaftening of the Lord. He is thy Father. He never loves thee more, than when he chastens thee. There is no hatred in his heart. No vengeance in his hand. He affures thee of this from the infallible word of his mouth. Here may thy faith be fettled: Believe him—he is doing thee good—he is promoting thy best interest.

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dence, and then the cross will be the means of bringing thee to the near-est and holiest communion, which thou canst have with thy Father on this side heaven.

In this amiable light look upon thy Father and thy friend. Never forget it, O my foul, but keep it in the faith of thy heart, especially when he chasteneth thee. Then expect from his love patience under his stroke, and after it the peaceable fruits of righteousness. These will grow abundantly upon the cross. They grow no where else fo rich and ripe. Survey the promifes, which he has made to his fuffering children, and wait in faith for a joyful harvest. In due season thou shalt reap, if thou faint not. And the cross is intended to keep thee from fainting; because thy Father ther sends it for the increase and for the strengthening of thy faith. Read and study what he says to thee upon this point. Learn and inwardly digest it. In time of trouble thou wilt find great comfort from depending upon the promise of the Father to give thee an happy issue. Meditate then upon the scriptures, in which he has declared his gracious purposes in afflicting his children, namely,

First, It is for the trial of faith. God gives it, and then tries it; that it may appear to be his grace, that men may see it, and honor him for it, and that it may grow by use, which is as necessary to spiritual, as exercise is to bodily growth. Trial shews the truth, and brings forth the power of grace, and is thereby a matter of great joy: as the apostle James testifies writing to the twelve tribes in their dispersion and afflic-

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tion. "My brethren, count it ALL " joy, when ye fall into divers " temptations, knowing this, that " the trying of your faith worketh " patience; but let patience have "its perfect work, that ye may be " perfect and entire, wanting no-"thing." God be thanked for this word of strong consolation. What a precious scripture is it! How full of encouragement to the believer to look with delight at temptations! -not temptations to fin, but trials, fent from God to keep from fin. When he falls into them by providence, and meets them in the way of duty, then he should judge of them, not from sense, which can feel nothing but forrow in afflictions, but he should take account of them from the declared purpose of God in fending them, and he should wait in faith for the bleffings which they are

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are to produce. God fays, that they are matter of joy, of ALL joy, of all true spiritual joy-they are not only fuch in his account, but he also makes them fuch to the believer. Accordingly we read in scripture of many who did rejoice in trials. The Hebrews did: For they took JOYFULLY the spoiling of their goods. Paul did: I am comforted, fays he, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. Nay he went farther-Wegkory in tribulations. He leaped for joy with the cross upon his back. He boasted and triumphed under it. Whatthe world accounted his worst, he made his very crown of rejoicing: For he knew and found, that the trial of faith worketh patience: Faith receives the cross from the Father's love, and learns to bear it after Jesus: By the grace of the Spirit the bearing of it, as it exercises,

cifes, fo it improves patience. The believer becomes more acquainted with it. Use, we say, makes perfect. He learns, where the strength to bear is-from whence his comforts are to flow-and from whose hand the bleffed iffue is to be received. He waits therefore with fweet submission to his Father's will, that patience may have its perfect work, that by trials it may be exercifed, by sharper trials it may be improved, and by daily trials it may appear to be the genuine grace of the Spirit, perfect and entire, lacking nothing. This the believer aims at. He would have every thing that belongs to true patience, and growth in it; he would have it refined by every fiery trial, and made purer and brighter, that it may hold out, till it have done its perfect work. The apostle Peter gives the same encou-

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encouragement to the same afflicted Hebrews: He exhorts them to faith and patience under their fufferings in these words—"Ye are kept by " the power of God through faith " unto falvation, ready to be revealed " in the last time; wherein ye great-" ly rejoice, though now for a sea-" fon, if need be, ye are in heaviness "through manifold temptations; " that the trial of your faith being " much more precious than of gold " that perisheth, though it be tried " with fire, might be found unto " praise and honor and glory at the " appearing of Jesus Christ." What treasures of love are laid open in this scripture! Read, O my soul, and adore the exceeding riches of thy Father's grace. He knew how needful afflictions were, both for the flesh and for the spirit, and therefore he appointed thee thy portion

portion, and he has in merey informed thee of his defign in them. He has revealed his will for the ground of thy faith, that when he fends them, thou mightest experience the bleffings promifed to his fuffering children. The belief of his love in contriving and in proportioning them to the ability given thee to bear them would administer matter of joy in forrow, and by trusting to his faithfulness thou wouldst greatly rejoice; thy joy would fo far exceed thy forrow. The heaviness is but for a seasonthe joy for ever. The heaviness only during the trial of faith—the joy increased by that very trial. The trial was only to prove the truth of faith, and to evidence the power of it-not to weaken, but to strengthen it-not to destroy, but to refine it. The refiner does not intend

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intend to lofe one atom of his gold, but puts it into the fire to purge away the drofs. So does God. When he hath tried me, fays Job, I shall come forth as gold. He was tried in the fire, and his faith was found unto praise and honor and glory. Therefore he is fet forth for an example of fuffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we account them happy, not who fuffer, but who endure suffering. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have feen the end of the Lord; that the Lord abounds in compassion, and is of tender mercy. O my foul, wait upon the same Lord, and he will bring all thy trials to the same bleffed end. He has the same pity and mercy to thee, as he had to Job. Thou hast the same reason to believe it, as he had. Thy faith is tried in the fire, as his was, that it

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may come out of it like gold. The trial was appointed in perfect love, and is to produce the greatest bleffings of love. Thy God has most gracious defigns towards thee in putting thee into the fire. It is to try thy faith; whether thou canst trust him there. It is to improve thy faith by the trial, that thou mayest trust him more. If thou hast trusting faith, it is to teach thee patient faith. It is a hard lesson to learn to trust against sense and earnal reason, and to say, This cross is good for me, I defire to fubmit, and to take it patiently at the hand of God. O it is very hard to believe, that there is nothing but love in every fuffering, and it is harder to find it fo, while fuffering. And yet the Spirit of God declares there is nothing but love in it, and by believing thou wilt certainly find it. May

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May every trial of thy faith establish it, and thereby bring forth

Secondly, The bleffed fruit of patience. The cross does good to faith: because by it God teaches his children to bear up, and to hold out, trusting to his promises and waiting in hope for his fulfiling them, and thus it exercises patience. Which is a grace of the Spirit, learned only in the school of Christ, and therefore the giver of it among his other high titles is called, the God of patience. He first enables his afflicted children to believe what he has faid of his love in afflicting them, and then to wait for the experience of his love under their afflictions. This waiting quietly, without giving way to fense, or unbelief is patience. Faith is tried, and stands the trial. Tribulation comes, faith is exercised with it, but velvi

but holds fast its confidence in the word of God, and thereby has full proof of the faithfulness of God. This worketh patience—a quiet fubmiffion to the divine will-and an holy subjection to the divine rod. The flesh murmurs, self-will repines, self-indulgence rebels; but faith looks up for the promised strength and by it conquers them. It stops their mouths with a Hush-Be still and know that he is God -He is my fovereign and my Father—this affliction indeed is not for the prefent joyous, but rather grievous - nevertheless it comes from his love, love guides his hand, love will bring good out of it—O that all within me may fubmit to his will, and bless his name.

But the cross is hard and painful; flesh and blood cannot bear it. True, but grace can. To endure is the

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proper work of patience. It endures by trusting to the word of God, and by receiving from him the promised strength. What cannot fuch a grace endure? When God fays, "Fear not, I will be "with thee, when thou goest "through the fire;" the believer is hereby forewarned of the fire, and when he is called to go through it, he expects the presence of his God, that if the bush burn, it may not be confumed. How comfortably does the apostle Peter speak of this to the fuffering Hebrews? "Be-"loved, think it not strange con-" cerning the fiery trial, which is " to try you, as though fome strange " thing had come unto you; but " rejoice, inasmuch as ye are par-" takers of Christ's sufferings, that " when his glory shall be revealed, " ye may be glad also with exceed-" ing

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"ing joy." He would have them to be accustomed to the cross, it being the only way to the crown. There is nothing new or strange in it. All the crowned heads in heaven carried it, while they were upon earth: yea the king of faints went bearing it before them. There never was forrow like unto his forrow: and yet for the joy that was fet before him, he endured the crofs, and despised the shame. Take up thy cross, O my foul, and follow him. Look unto Jesus. He will give thee strength. He has taken the curse and wrath out of thy suffering. Thou wilt fee it the fruit of his love to thee, and it will be the means of engaging thy love to him. What, if it be a burning fiery furnace: Is it not almighty love, which calls thee to go into it? Not to hurt thee, but to try thee,

to give thee happy proof of the foundness of thy faith, and of the power of thy patience. He would have thee to know, that thy patience trusting to his tried word is invincible: that no blow can beat it, no fire can burn it, from Christ. He would bring thee to experience what the prophet did, when he faid—" Thy word is tried to the " uttermost, and thy servant loveth "it." The good word of God was tried, as far as it could be, and the trial proved its truth, and therefore he had fresh reason to love it. The trial increased his confidence in the truth, and his experience in the sweetness of its promises; thereby his patience was confirmed, and he could rejoice, inasmuch as he was a partaker of Christ's sufferings, both of their infinite sufficiency, and also of their mighty efficacy to fave.

fave. By enjoying these bleffings under the cross, his heart was happy in the joy fet before him. He had the earnest and the foretast of heaven: for he knew, that when the glory of Jesus should be revealed, he should be glad with exceedand antime this over

ing joy.

But the carnal mind is ready to complain-this would be true, if the fuffering was short, but it is long, as well as hard—I have borne up a great while, but now my patience is quite tired out-I am ready to give all up, being weary of my life with the length of my trials. How many have I known in this melancholy case? Fair blossoms in the mild and gentle spring. In fine weather and smiling sunshine they looked beautiful, and gave hopes of their being in the tree of life, and of their growing and ripening upon VOL. II.

it. But alas! a trying time came, a bleak cold north wind, and a very sharp piercing frost-like leaves in autumn, down fell the promifing bloom. My heart has mourned again and again at the fall of one and another, and mourns while I am writing this over feveral now living, who have forfaken God and his ways for the world and its delights. They met with trouble, and it was too much for them. They were tempted, and they had not strength to resist. The reason is this affigned—" He that received " feed into stony places, the fame " is he that heareth the word, and " anon with joy receiveth it; yet " hath he not root in himself, but " endureth for a while: for when "tribulation or persecution ariseth " because of the word by and by he " is offended." He is offended and falls

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falls away, because he had no root: and they, who have root, are too often tempted to be offended at the They find it very difficult cross. to bear up under it. Natural infirmity, remaining corruption, and strength of temptation make pain and suffering grievous to the flesh: yea, when they are forced to bear the cross long, and it is very heavy, they are apt to murmur and fret, grow discontented, are tempted to unbelief, and if they give way to it, to despair. How necessary is it then, that they should be enabled to possess their souls in patience under their great and many trials? To which end nothing can contribute more effectually, than a fettled faith in the word and promise of a reconciled God. This will stay and quiet the foul, when trouble comes. It is the chastening of E 2 my

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my Lord, fays the believer-my loving Father fends it for good— He is only trying my faith and patience, and the trial will end wellit is grievous indeed at present, and I go on my way weeping, but I have my supports now, and I shall soon reap a joyful harvest. I have a faithful promise for it, which is a constant cordial and keeps up my spirits. My God will be with me as long as the trial lasts—he says he will. I believe him, and therefore expect his promised presence and strength, till faith and patience have their perfect work. Such a cordial the apostle James gives to the Hebrews. They wanted it much. They were greatly oppressed by the rich, and some of them were perfecuted even unto death. "Be patient therefore, bre-"thren, fays he, unto the coming " of

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" of the Lord: behold the huf-" bandman waiteth for the preci-" ous fruit of the earth, and hath " long patience for it, until he re-" ceive the early and the latter rain; " be ye also patient: establish your " hearts: for the coming of the "Lord draweth nigh." He puts great stress upon the Lord's coming: Yet a very little while and your Lord will come to appear for you: Its true you are in a fiery trial, but your God calls you to it; and it may feem to you a long trial, but he has promised you grace sufficient to bear it: Trust him then, and he will keep you patient. He knows your frame and temper, and bids you look about you. See, how the husbandman waits, having only a general promise, that seed time and harvest shall not fail; and is it not more reasonable that you should E 3 wait

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wait with patience the end of the Lord. He fows his feed and leaves it. It endures much hard weather, frost and snow, rough winds and wintry storms. Summer comes, but he must still wait: His corn is in ear, yet it is liable to suffer from long drought and from blights, and to be beat down with heavy thunder showers; but he has long patience. At last he is not disappointed of his hope. He reaps the precious fruit of the earth, and gathers in his joyful harvest. Behold, O my foul, and imitate. How strong is his faith! Is thine like his? God has only faid, that the feafons shall not fail: He has not faid, that the harvest in every field and country shall not fail, yet the farmer fows in faith and waits in patience. But the promise is sure to thee—" He "that believeth shall never be con-" founded,"

"founded," and dost thou believe this with a hope that maketh not ashamed? He has long patience: How is thine? Art thou not weary and faint in thy mind, especially when the course of providence seems to run counter to thy hope? Canst thou hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him, when he chastises thee, and seems in anger to cast thee off? He waits long for an harvest of perishing things, and canst not thou wait to have thy fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life? O what need hast thou of patience! Seek it, pray for it, beg of thy God to establish thy heart; that thou mayest be rooted and grounded in faith: And if troubles come great and heavy, thou mayest possess thy soul in patience, so long as the Lord shall please to exercise thee with them. And E 4

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never forget that he will certainly come, and quickly. Let this promife keep thee from fainting. He will come in with his supports; he will administer his comforts under the cross; he will remove it in due feason. What can be required for the establishing of thy heart, which is not promised to thee in this scripture? "Cast not away therefore " your confidence, which hath great " recompence of reward: For ye " have need of patience, that after " ye have done the will of God, ye " might receive the promise: For " it is but a very little while, and " he that shall come will come, and " will not tarry. Wait then on the "Lord, Omy foul; be of good cou-" rage, and he shall strengthen thine "heart: Wait, I say, on the Lord." Perhaps thou art ready to reply - I have waited long, but am still

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to learn: for my trials are fo various, that as foon as I have been well exercised with one fort, prefently it is changed, and another comes, to which I was not accuftomed-And this continually, like Job's messengers; one after another, and still the last brings a sadder meffage than the former—Hard and long trials I have endured, but this constant change of them wearies me out; they come so unexpected, they find me fo unprepared, they fo harrass my troubled mind, that I am ready to fink under themfrequently I am tempted to think; that if God loved me, he would not delight in afflicting me in this manners to made tholares of sent

Thus the carnal mind is apt to reason against God and his ways: But when the believer goes into the sanctuary and consults the oracle,

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he receives an answer of grace and peace, and is fatisfied that this change of trials is nothing new with God. It is his usual method of training up his children in faith and patience. He appoints troubles for the exercise, and all forts of troubles for the improvement of their graces. The captain of their falvation was made perfect through fufferings: So are all the foldiers of Christ Jesus. It was the remark of one of his champions-MANY are the troubles of the righteous. The apostle James speaking of the persecuted Hebrews says, they had DIVERS temptations, different one from another; and his brother Peter tries to comfort them under their MANIFOLDafflictions, many in number, fucceding as fast as wave follows after wave, and of many kinds, some distressed them in their bodies, others

others in their minds, in their character, in their substance, in their families, in every way that affliction could be felt. Patience is the grace fuited to all these trials: Because it bears them in the strength of God: For it consists in trusting to his fure word of promife, and believing it against sense and feeling: Faith fays, this present trial comes from the love of my covenant God: Patience fays, then I will bear it, till he bring it to a good iffue. Whatever the trial be, patience has the same promise, and the same promise-keeping God to trust in. If he fend variety of trials, it is only to give a variety of proofs, that he is faithful, who hath promised. He knows we have divers diseases, which must have divers remedies to heal them. We have manifold evils in us, which require

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require manifold afflictions to subdue them. And God intends to give us many bleffings, and he appoints many troubles to bring us to the enjoyment of them. All these are gracious dispensations, mercifully contrived, and feafonably administered, that patience may learn to bear, and may learn to perfevere in bearing. God changes the trial. Patience has a new lesfon, and a new opportunity of improvement. A good teacher brings his scholars forward, and when they are gone through one book and are well grounded in it, then he advances them to another: When they have learned Latin, he puts them into Greek. But he does not change their studies out of ill will or hatred to his scholars. They had rather be at play, than minding their books; and they had rather get but one

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one lesson, and be faying it over from day to day; but the master knows what is best for them, and he keeps them to their work. God trains up his scholars in various exercifes, but all for their improvement. He does not confult what would please them, but he changes the lesson, as he sees needful. He knows when their faith wants confirming, when their patience needs establishing, and therefore in much mercy he fends a new trial for the growth of those graces. Least they should mistake his meaning in varying his trials so often, he gives them this general rule-" There hath no " temptation taken you, but fuch " as is common to man; but God " is faithful, who will not fuffer you " to be tempted above that ye are " able, but will with the tempta-"tion also make a way to escape, " that

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"that ye may be able to bear it." The Father will exercise his children with no trial, but fuch as is common to man; and he will enable them to bear it; and will make a way for them to escape. How should these considerations silence their murmurings? If the trial be new to them, yet it is common to man. If it be hard to bear, vet grace is almighty to ftrengthen patience. If it last long, yet it shall end well. How convincing are these reasons? How patiently should believers, influenced by them, fubmit to the chastening of the Lord? Andyet there is still unbelief in them, which will be urging fresh complaints, and firring up impatience.

The poor sufferer, feeling his smart, is apt to think—Any cross, but mine, would be tolerable—I should not say one word against

God,

God, if he tried me with any other; but this cuts me to the heart—Oh it is a very agony both to my flesh and spirit—there is nothing like it—it is so exactly calculated to cross my temper, to hurt me in the tenderest part, and to rob me of my most beloved gratification, that it is the very thing in the world, from which I could have wished to be exempted—Any cross, Lord, but this.

Nay but O man, who art thou that repliest thus against God? Hold thy tongue as it were with a bridle. Let not self-will murmur, and folly speak against the chastening of the Lord. He says that he is dealing with thee as with sons. Where is thy faith then? that sense and feeling should be permitted to plead, and to be heard against the witness of God in his word. Where is thy patience? that thou canst

canst not bear the present cross, but wouldst take up any other. Alas! alas! mistaken man-what canst thou bear in thine own strength? Thou feelest the smart of thy prefent crofs, and it makes thee peevish and fretful: The smart of any other would have the very fame effect. A less than this, the least thing in the world, that opposes thy will, would ftir up thine impatience. Observe thy temper, how it catches fire at any little opposition from men. The fame temper will be inflamed and rage, when God chastises thee, if thou refuse to receive his correction. Thy rebelwill is the cause of thy pain, and makes thy cross so bitter: For if God's will and thine were one, there could be no cross; but his will is almighty, and yet thou refistest it. God puts his yoke upon thee, and thou

thou art like a stubborn beast, which only hurts and galls itself by striving and kicking against its work. He tries thee with one cross, and thou art dissatisfied, thou couldst contrive a better for thyself. Thou wouldst be thine own lord and governor. Self-will, they fay, is a fure guide to self-destruction. Beware then of thine own will. When God calls thee to take up any cross, dont wish for another. He sends this, and to it he requires thy fubmission. It is thy duty, and thine interest to receive it for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience; but instead of taking it up quietly, and waiting for the good truit of it, thou art quarrelling with it, and opposing the will of God. O take heed of this vain attempt. It is a snare laid for thee. A fatal trap, into which the love of independence ein I

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pendence seduced the first man, and which ever fince eafily enfnares his posterity. When thou art tempted to murmur at thy present cross -confider what it is-meditate a moment upon thy Father's love, who most mercifully appointed, who most feafonably fent it-and if it be nothing strange, but common to man, then dont try to shift it off, but feek the promised grace to bear it. There is not a cross, that he will lay upon thee, but he has laid it before upon others, and it will tend greatly to the peace of thy mind, and to the restraining of thine own will, to observe how he dealt with them. Take notice then, how he in love exercised them with every crofs, that can be laid upon thee, how he supported them under it, and what bleffed fruit they reaped from it.

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This is the kingdom of the cros; and it is the Lord's will, that every disciple in it should be as his master. He has chosen them to fuffer with him, as well as to reign with him. And therefore intending to call forth his gifts and graces into daily exercife, he has honored them with the daily cross. He sees it needful often to change it, and he has informed them of his gracious designs herein. There is scarce any kind of suffering, but some or other of his people have been tried with it, and he has left promises in scripture of his support, and of his coming in with comfort, and in due time with deliverance. So that whatever thy cross be, it is not fent, O my soul, to hinder, but to promote communion with thy God, and to help thee forward in the heavenly way.

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Art thou pinched with poverty a believer, but in distressed circumstances? Bleffed art thou of the Lord. " Hearken, my beloved " brother, hath not God chosen the " poor of this world rich in faith " and heirs of the kingdom, which "he hath promised to them that "love him?" What a mercy is it to have thine outward estate thus appointed for thee by the choice of thy heavenly Father! And the same estate which he chose for his best beloved. In the exceeding riches of his love he decreed, that thou shouldst be poor in this world, as Iefus was-He knew it was best for thee-and he chose thee rich in faith—outward poverty was to be the means of thine improvement in spiritual riches—thy want of temporals was to bring thee to live more by faith upon eternal things. O ina how

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how good is thy God! He fent thee poverty to enrich thee. It is to bring thee near to God, to keep thee near to him, and to afford thee daily proof of his precious love. These are some of the blessings of rich faith, and these are worth more than all the treasures of the world. Be content then—thy God will supply all thy need. Be thankful—thou art an heir of the kingdom. Bless thy God—no creature out of heaven has more reason to bless him, than thou hast—He is thine—All things are thine.

Perhaps thou art tried with bodily pain and sickness: These are hard trials. To endure them is the very crown of patience; but strength to endure them is promised, and in waiting upon the Lord will be received; so that outward pains shall produce inward joy. Thus we

read:

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read: "The Lord will strengthen "him upou the bed of languishing, "thou wilt make all his bed in his "fickness." He is weak, God strengthens him. He is sick, God comforts him. He is in pain, God smooths his bed, and he lies patient. Sickness cannot be pleasant in itfelf; but is profitable for its fruits. It is the appointment of God, and teaches submission to his sovereign will. It comes to the believer with a message of precious love-This bitter cup is fent from thy heavenly Father, who has many gracious purpoles to answer by thy taking it -He would humble thee and let thee feel what thou art, and what thou deservest—he would mortify the life of fense-He would give occasion to increase faith and to advance patience-Drink it up-There is a rich cordial at the bottoin

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tom—The tast of it will draw out thy heart in love to God. Happy sickness! which promotes spiritual health. Blessed pain! which the kind physician often makes the way to pleasure, yea to the sweetest communications of his love.

Art thou in the fire of persecution? Are thy friends and relations all in arms against thee for leaving them to follow Christ? Is thy dependence upon them, and art thou greatly tempted to make fome compliances, least they should cast thee out, and thou shouldst come to poverty? This may be a fiery trial; but it is a bleffed one. He will make it so, who says, "Blessed " are ye when men shall revile you, " and persecute you, and shall say " all manner of evil against you " falfly for my fake. Rejoice, and " be exceeding glad: Because great

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" is your reward in heaven: For " fo persecuted they the prophets, "who were before you." This perfecution will be fo far from stopping thee in thy way, that it will both help thee forward, and will also make thy journey pleasant. Thy friends revile thee: Look up to him, who when he was reviled. reviled not again: He will turn their reproach into a bleffing. They persecute thee: the goodly fellowship of the prophets carried the fame cross, and found it no hindrance to their spiritual joy. They fay all manner of evil of thee: Take heed that they fay it falfly, and for Christ's sake; and if thou fuffer for him, and art evil spoken of for thine attachment to him, then rejoice and be exceding glad: for great is thy reward in heaven. Thou art a fufferer with him, and thou

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thou shalt also reign with him. Look forward to the promised kingdom. Expect it in faith, and the prospect will give thee at every step joy unspeakable and full of glory. silve the power of all will start

Perhaps this perfecution may be carried on to acts of injustice, even to the depriving thee of thy property: thou mayest suffer the loss of all thy worldly goods for Christ's fake. When God calls thee to this trial, he will give thee strength to bear it, and thou shalt be a great gainer by thy loss. So Paul found it-" I have suffered the loss of all "things, and I do account them " but dung that I may win Christ." So it was with the Hebrews-"They took joyfully the spoiling of " their goods, knowing in them-" felves, that they had in heaven a " betterand an enduring substance." VOL. II. What

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What love was here! God was their portion, and their great reward. He had made them happy in the sense of his love; and to manifest the reality, and to demonstrate the power of it, what great things love can do for his name's fake, he took away all their earthly delights. Let them go, fays Paul, I part with them as freely as I would with fo much dung, for I have experienced that the loss of them has brought me to nearer fellowship with my precious, most precious Jesus. Happy parting, say the Hebrews, farewell goods and chattels -we rejoice in the spoiling of our goods: because we have got faster hold of the substance by the loss of the shadow—outward comforts are gone, but inward richly fupply their place-we are robbed of our earthly possessions, thank God we can-

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not be robbed of our better and enduring substance: for it is reserved in heaven for us, where no moth or rust can corrupt, and where no thieves can break through or steal: in this faith we find our hearts free and light and happy in running the

race that is fet before us.

Thy trial may be fomething still nearer. It may be the loss of thy dearest relations. The wife of thy bosom is taken from thee. favorite child is dead, perhaps drowned, or burned, or killed at a stroke: the delight of thine eyes is gone, and thine heart is ready to break. All forrow is not forbidden, but forrowing even as others, who have no hope. Tears may flow, but christian hope keeps them within their proper bounds: it restrains and fanctifies them. Thy wife is dead: thy child is dead. F 2

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. He requires thee to forfake living wife and children, be they ever so dear, if love of them cannot be enjoyed without forfeiting his love. "And there were " great multitudes with Christ, and " he turned and faid unto them, if " any man come unto me, and hate " not his father and mother, and " wife and children, and brethren, " and fifters he cannot be my dif-"ciple." The disciple gives up himself to the master's disposal—to learn of him-to believe in himand to love him. My fon, fays he, give me thy heart. He has a right to it, and he will admit of no rival. It is his temple and his throne; in which he alone will be worthipped and honored. He is a jealous God, and if any love hinder love to him, it must be torn from the heart. O disciple,

disciple, read this scripture, study it carefully, and it may be the means of shewing thee the true cause of thy great forrow about worldly relations; it is because thou hast so little love to thy best relation and friend, Jesus Christ, If thy love to him was what it should be; thy heart would not be fo grieved at those losses; but would in patient fubmission acknowlege—It is the Lord, let him do what feemeth were two born into thoog mid

Perhaps thou art mourning for the loss of living friends. They have forfaken thee. Old connections, as dear to thee as thine own foul, are broken. Persons, whom thou hadft known from thy childhood, and with whom thou hadst grown up in strict friendship, are now thine enemies, and become so without any offence or fault of noy "

thine.

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thine. They hate thee, because thou art a real christian, and their hatred is harder to bear, because the world joins them in it, and thy name is every where cast out with contempt or the best religions of single

It must be so. The decree cannot be altered-I WILL PUT enmity between the feed of the woman. and the feed of the serpent. God put it, and put it for ever. The enmity broke out, as foon as there were two born into the world. Cain hated Abel, and flew him. Ever fince, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit. There has been one, and but one perfect man upon the earth fince the fall, and the enmity of the world followed him unto death. Least we should marvel at its following us, he has forewarned us-" If the world hate " you,

"you, ye know that it hated me " before it hated you: if ye were of " the world, the world would love "its own, but because ye are not " of the world, but I have chosen " you out of the world, therefore "the world hateth you." What a strange reason is this! Because I love you, therefore the world hates you. What God chooses, the world rejects. Why then, O my foul, dost thou court its smiles, or fear its frowns? The world, which lieth in wickedness, cannot love thee, and its enmity cannot hurt thee. Remember the words of Jefus-" These things have I spoken " unto you, that in me ye might "have peace: in the world ye " SHALL have tribulation, but be " of good courage, I have over-" come the world." I have overcome it for you, and I will over-Svol. come

come it in you: tribulation from it shall not hurt your peace in me, but shall increase it: I will make my love the sweeter for its enmity: troubles from it shall be well repaid with my joys: and when it quite casts you out, then will I take you into my bosom, and let you know what the affection of the

heavenly bridegroom is.

Why then, O my foul, art thou afraid of such an exchange? Is it not for thy profit to part with the world for Christ, and to give up its joys for his? What greater gain eanst thou expect, than to win Christ, and by him to be crucified to this present evil world? Dying to it thou wilt be more alive to him, and therefore happier in him. As other ties are dissolved, thy heart will be knit closer to thy divine lover. Warmed with his precious love,

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love, " cloathed with the fun and "the moon under thy feet" thou wilt hasten thy steps heavenwards; yea, thou wilt be ready to take wing and to fly to the embraces of thy dear, ever, infinitely dear Jesus. Thou wilt want no comment upon the words of the bride the lambs wife, but wilt gladly use them after her-" Make haste, my be-"loved, and be thou like to a roe; "or to a young hart upon the "mountains of spices." inhim to Tol

boln former ages the children of God were often deprived of their liberty, cast into prisons, and bound in chains. This feems to us an heavy cross. To be shut up in a dark dungeon, put into fetters, and deprived of every worldly comfort, requires great patience: but even this did not stop them in their way to heaven, nor in the enjoyment of mori God

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God by the way. Paul the prisoner of the Lord often mentions it among his highest honors, that he was accounted worthy to fuffer for the name of Christ. He and Silas were cruelly beaten with many stripes at Philippi, were put into the inner prison, and their feet fastened in the flocks; but the Lord was with them, and he turned their prifon into a paradife: his joy made them forget their wounds and pains: for at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and SANG PRAISES unto God. This has often been the cafe fince their time: the Lord has often vifited his prisoners, and the light of his countenance has made them happy in their bonds. Indeed we are not called to this kind of fuffering at present; thanks be to his grace. This is a day of fuch uncommon mercies, that we have more to fear from

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from our want of thankfulness, than from our want of liberty. I pray God we may not grow licentious, and abuse our great privileges, but may he enable us fo to value them and live up to them, that he may be honored for continuing them to us, and to our posterity. and ; rolling

In former times also believers were often forced to feal the testimony of Jesus with their blood. And even this did not stop them in their walk, nor hinder their communion with God. Hear one of his martyrs-" The Holy Ghost "witneffeth, that bonds and afflic-"tions wait for me in every city: " but none of these things move me, " neither account I my life dear " unto myself, so that I may finish. " my course with joy, and the mi-" niftry, which I have received of "the Lord Jesus." This was not

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a vain brag. He spake it in humble faith, depending upon his master's promise, that he would stand by him, when his blood should be shed, and would make him an happy conqueror in the hour of death. And he was more than conqueror; but the grace, which made him fo, was not peculiar to, or the privilege of, an apostle: the same was given to a noble army of martyrs; who overcame fatan by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. What a triumph of patience was this! They were enabled to bear any thing, even the loss of life, rather than fuffer the loss of their Lord's favor. Examine, O my foul, whether thy faith be like theirs. Canst thou endure, as they did? How is thy patience under the

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the cross! Read what they went through, who are well reported of by the Holy Ghost for their faith, and remember the same grace is promised to thee to carry thee patiently through all thy fufferings-"They had trials of cruel mock-" ings and fcourgings, yea more-" over of bonds and imprisonments: " they were stoned, they were sawn " afunder, were tempted, were flain " with the fword; they wandered " about in sheep skins and goat " Ikins, being destitute, afflicted, " tormented; of whom the world " was not worthy, they wandered " in deferts and in mountains, and " in dens and in caves of the earth, " and these all obtained a good re-" port through faith." They are celebrated by the holy Spirit for having patiently endured, till they had run their race, and finished their

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their course with joy. He sets their example before thee, that thou shouldst not be sothful in running the same race, but a follower of them, who through faith and

patience inherit the promises.

Meditate feriously, O my foul, and reflect again and again upon the great need thou hast of patience. Remember the cross lies in thy way to the crown, and thou canst not avoid it. The Lord has appointed it to be thy portion, and it is entailed upon thee, as much as the kingdom is. When he exercises and tries thee with it, he does not act merely as a fovereign, but as a Father. He deals with thee, as with fons. His children want, and his children have correction. None are without it. But they find it hard to bear. The will of the flesh is impatient under the cross. Selflove

love hates it. Carnal reason cannot be reconciled to it. If it be thus with fons, what must it be with bastards? The natural man, when he is brought into great trouble, is like a mad beaft. If his pains be tharp and acute, he rages, storms, and blasphemes: if they be also lasting, having no God to go to, he often gives way to despair, and dispatches himself with a pistol, running to hell for relief. O my foul marvel not at this. If God had left thee to thy felf, the same trials might have brought thee to the fame unhappy end. How necessary then is patience? without it thou canst not bear the cross, nor hold on thy way under it, nor profit from it. And how necessary are the doctrines before infifted on, for the practice of patience? No one can submit to bear the cross, unless he

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he be first persuaded that God is reconciled to him and loves him in his Son. When he is fatisfied of this, he will fee all things (the cross among the rest) well ordered for him in the covenant, and all working together for the best. The cross is mercifully fent to make a trial of these doctrines: by it God would manifest the truth and bring forth the power of them, that it may appear they were not learned, as notions, but experienced by his almighty grace. His end is answered. The trial of faith establishes the peace of God in the conscience, and confirms the love of God in the heart, and thereby keeps patience waiting for strength to hold out, and for a bleffed iffue. The believer made strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus endures patiently. He knows from whom his

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his cross comes. It is the appointment of his Father; who does not fend it in hatred. He never afflicts his children, but in perfect love. He never puts a heavy crofs upon them to break the back of their patience, but to strengthen it, and to train them up to bear greater burdens. He would teach them their weakness, and his strengththeir wants, and his supplies—he would call forth their faith for the honor of his word—and their patience for the glory of his faithfulness. Lord, teach me these lessons. I want the experience of them every day. O my God, make me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. There only can I learn to fuffer thy will; to thee I come for this grace. Affift me, O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation in reading thy word, that through patience 2 POINT

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tience and comfort of the scriptures I may have hope. Enable me to meditate night and day on the doctrines of grace revealed in them, and to mix faith with them, that I may be strong in the patience of hope. O merciful God and Father, I defire to be strengthened mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man to bear thy cross. I would live in a continual dependence upon thine arm to carry me through every trial. O thou God of patience and confolation, enable me to bear thy cross daily to the praise of the glory of thy grace, and to bear it patiently to the end, that I may finish my course with joy. Be it unto thy fervant according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Amen, so be it Lord,

To receive benefit from afflic-

tions is a great bleffing. To suffer them with a resigned will, yea to rejoice in them, as if all the joy in the world was come to us, is contrary to sense and feeling; to carnal reason and to human philosophy; therefore our heavenly Father has graciously informed his children of his love in afflicting them: These informations are the ground of their faith, and were given to silence murmuring in their hearts, and to keep them waiting patiently for the promised fruits of suffering. Among which this is a

THIRD, and not the leaft, namely, the crucifying of the flesh, and the deadening of it in those affections and lusts; which, if not daily mortified, would stop the believer in his walk, and would hinder his holy communion with God. When faith has been tried, and is come

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out of the fire, proved to be the faith of God's elect, and when patience has gone through the fiery furnace and has found no harm, then it is the Father's will to advance and to improve his children in the doctrine of the cross. They have a carnal mind still, which is enmity against God-a body of fin -an old man of fin-the flesh in them lusting against the spirit. This their fleshly nature, which doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, is the greatest enemy to their holy walk with God in constant peace, and growing love: Because it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The life of sense in them is always opposing the life of God. Hence the continual war between nature and grace, which if a man does not find in himself, he may depend upon it, he either tuo

either never was alive to God, or else at that time he is dead to God. If he be living by the faith of the Son of God, he will also be fighting the good fight of faith against all the enemies of his falvation. He will never think of putting off the whole armor of God until he put off the body of fin and of death: And until that day come, he will be striving for the mastery over his body, that he may keep it under and bring it into subjection. How absolutely necessary this striving is appears from the tender compassion of our God and Father, who has appointed and decreed in covenant love all the croffes, which were to be laid upon our rebel-nature, and which were to be kept upon it, till death.) It is his holy will hereby to restrain its affections, to mortify its lufts, to hedge up its way by

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thorns and afflictions, and by thefe means he would weaken its power. Is not this mercy unspeakable? And what more likely method could he contrive thus to crucify the flesh, than to put it, and to keep it upon the cross? For as the finful nature is deadened the new man is renewed day by day. The one grows more alive by the mortification of the other. The subduing of unbelief, pride and felf-feeking is the strengthening of faith, humility and glorifying God. This command therefore is frequently given to believers-Put off the old man-put on the new-mortify your members which are upon the earth—crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. And this is spoken to believers high in grace, as high as ever any went, or can go. The Spirit of God fays to the SAINTS

at Rome-" Let not fin reign in " your mortal body, that ye should " obey it in the lusts thereof, nei-"ther yeild ye your members as " instruments of unrighteousness " unto fin." The infallible Spirit speaks to the SAINTS at Ephesus-" Put off concerning the former " conversation the old man, who is " corrupt according to the deceit-" ful lusts; and put on the new " man." The same precept is given by the same Spirit to the SAINTS at Colofs-" Mortify your mem-" bers which are upon the earth." This is an holy war; and all the faints of God are engaged in it. They are fighting against every thing finful, but more particularly watching under arms against their own corrupt nature, which is their hardest warfare: Because there is no release from it, and it is carried

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on by continual felf-denial, by refifting the affections and lufts of the old man, and by opposing his giving up the members of his body, as instruments of unrighteousness unto fin. But as good foldiers of Christ Jesus they resist unto blood striving against sin. The captain of their falvation is always on their fide to encourage them with his promises, and to help them with his strength. He intends to lead them on conquering and to conquer, therefore he lays the cross upon their corruptions, as the most effectual means of subduing them, and to reconcile them to it, he speaks unto them, as unto children-

My fon, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. I do not afflict thee in hatred, but in covenant love. My design is to mortify the body of sin, and therefore

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I give thee this wholesome physic. Thou hast many bad humors and corruptions, for which I have appointed this sovereign medicine. Trust my skill—believe my love—depend upon mine arm—and thou wilt infallibly find it profitable to the spirit, however painful to the sless. Wait, and the end shall be blessed.

To this truth the prophet Isaiah bears a clear testimony. He explains the Lord's design in afflicting his people, and tells them, it was to purge them from their iniquity, to keep them from the love of sin, and to restrain the practice of it. He afflicted them in mercy: But he afflicted their enemies in justice. Hath he smitten Israel, as he smote those that smote him? No, he has not. Or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that Vol. II.

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are flain by him? No, he chaftifes his in love; he has appointed the measure, the time, the degree of their correction. "In measure " when it shooteth forth, thou wilt " debate with it; he stayeth his " rough wind in the day of his east " wind: by this (moderate afflic-" tion) therefore shall the iniquity " of Jacob be purged, and this is " all the fruit to take away his fin" -to keep him back from fin in general, and from the fin of idolatry in particular, as it follows in the prophet-" When he maketh all " the stones of the altar like chalk " stones that are beaten in funder, " then the groves and images shall " not stand up." The altar, at which they offered their idol-worship, shall be broken down, like stones burnt in pieces for lime, and the groves and images shall not stand

stand up, but shall be broken down also. These happy effects shall be brought about by sanctified affliction—iniquity shall be purged—sin shall be restrained—idolatry shall be thrown down. And God says, this shall be all the fruit and end of his chastening. He tells his people of his design, that they might know their affliction would bring forth good fruit, and that they might wait patiently for the sulfilling of his promise. Blessed are all they that wait for him: they shall never be disappointed of their hope.

How gracious is God in his dealings with his children! He provides the best for them, informs them of it, and because they have a fallen nature opposite to his holy mind and will, an enemy to his glory and to their own peace, he acquaints them with his design in sub-

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duing it. He appoints affliction for this end. It is the chastening of the Lord. He promises them ftrength to bear it, and comfort under it. Nothing but good shall flow from it. Iniquity their worst enemy shall be crucified: Actual fin, springing from the iniquity of their nature, shall be mortified: the heart shall be deadened to its old idols, and as it dies to them it shall be happier in the love of God. O bleffed cross! what mercies dost thou bring with thee? Is not that bleffed indeed, which under God produces fuch unspeakable mercies? Take it up then, O my foul, bear it patiently, and expect the choicest bleffings of the Father's love from Why dost thou refuse? It is heavy. It is painful. True, but what makes it so? The burden is from thy rebel will. The pain comes

comes from thy corruption unwilling to be mortified. Take it up in faith, and thou wilt find strength enough to bear it, and bleffings enow to make it a matter of all joy. Lord God, reconcile me to my daily cross. May thy will in it be done. Mortify fin, weaken its power, deaden its affections and lusts. Only Lord, whatever cross thou sendest, give grace with it, that I may bear it patiently, and may wait for its promised fruit. Thou knowest what would stop me in my heavenly journey, if it be my bosom favorite, the dearest object of my love, O tear it from my heart. Thou hast given me a defire to have every rival dethroned. O come, and reign alone in me, almighty Jesus, and subdue whatever opposes thy lawful government. My Saviour and my God, make all with-

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in me feel the power of thy cross. Crucify the body of fin. Spare nothing that would hinder my walking with thee, or would deprive me of thy friendship and favors. I bless thee, I worship thee, I glorify thee for this infinite grace, that thou haft made me willing to have all mine idols pulled down. On thee I depend every moment for keeping them down. O my loving lefus, carry on thy work, and in thine own way subdue fin in me : let me be planted together in the likeness of thy death, that I may be also in the likeness of thy resurrection-Dead to fin, but alive to God. I ask this for thy great names sake. Let it be thy good pleasure to hear and answer. I believe thou wilt. I have thy word for it. There I rest. Amen, and Amen.

With this faith review thy mercies. cies. Confider, O my foul, what a good God has done for thee, and what greater things he has still in store. He has in some measure reconciled thee to his crofs. Thou art convinced, it is thy Father's appointment, contrived for the best by his infinite love, and fettled on thee for thy richest portion in time -He fends it for the trial of thy faith, that it may be found unto praise and honor and glory-for the exercise and for the improvement of thy patience-for the mortifying of the body of fin, and for the deadening of the life of sense. This is the will of thy most loving and tender Father. He fends the crofs to be the means of these blessings. Certainly then it cannot hinder thy walk with him, but in all these refpects will tend to keep thee in the

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way, and to help thee forward in it, and thus

Fourthly, It will affift and promote thy holy fellowship and communion with God. This is the principal thing in religion. We fell from God by fin, and it is the greatest mercy to be brought back to him again. In this point all religions fail, but the christian. Christ is the way. No one cometh to the Father, but by him: for there is falvation in no other. He only can forgive fins: he only can justify finners. And this way (was contrived in the covenant of the Trinity for the highest display of their divine perfections:) Which begins to be manifested, when the Spirit of life enters into the finner and quickens him; when the Spirit of adoption enables him to trust in the atonement and obedience of Immanuel,

manuel, and thereby to see God reconciled and to call him, Abba, Father. With this faith in Jesus he expects from the Father's love all his promised mercies. Thus he has fellowship with the Father and the Son by the holy Spirit. He stands related to the eternal Three in their covenant offices, and he receives freely in believing the covenant blessings of each.

Among these blessings the cross is not the least: for it is mercifully appointed to be the means of bringing sinners to this divine sellowship. They go on stubbornly after their own hearts, and in the error of their own ways, until the Lord send some trouble to stop them. They look wishfully at the guilded cup of pleasure, and drink greedily of its sweets without any fear of the deadly poison mixed up with it.

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But when God convinces of fin, then comes forrow: they feel the poison working in a sense of guilt, and dread of punishment, which teach the want of a faviour, and are a good schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ. So God dealt with the chief of the old testament finners a giant in iniquity, who furpassed all that were before him in Jerusalem for idolatry and blood theding. The Lord fent his prophets to warn him of his guilt, but he would not hearken. He hardened his heart, till the Lord brought upon him the captains of the host of the king Affyria, who took Manaffeh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon: And when he was in affliction, he befought the Lord his God, and humbled himfelf greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed

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prayed unto him, and he was intreated of him, and heard his fupplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom: then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. His case was not singular. It is a common thing with the Lord to fend affliction to make fin bitter, that he may lead his people to true forrow for it, and that they may feek, until they find falvation. And when they have found it, he still uses the cross to keep them near unto himself. Indeed the cross alone has not this effect, but rather the contrary. The natural man has his fretfulness stirred up by fuffering, and cannot help murmuring at the will of God. But grace sanctifies suffering. God makes it a bleffing to his children, as by it he exercises their faith in such general promifes, as thefe.

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If God fend great and many troubles, they shall not separate believers from him: because he will then be with them; as he spake unto Israel -" Fear not to go down into " Egypt for I will there make of "thee a great nation, I will go " down with thee into Egypt." It was the house of bondage, in which the taskmasters heavily afflicted his descendents with their burdens, but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. So it is with the Ifrael of God. They need not fear any affliction: for their God has promifed to be with them in it, and by it to make them great christians; the more they are afflicted the more shall their graces multiply and grow-"I will be with thee in trouble, " fays God-I will redeem, I will " fave thee from all thy troubles-" many

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" many are the troubles of the righ-" teous, but I will deliver thee out " of them all—yea, when thou " paffest through the water and " through the fire, I will be with " thee, and will preserve thee from " all evil-I will make all these "things work together for thy These promises are a " good." great support to faith: for God engages to be with his children in every affliction. He does not intend that any should separate them from him, but that all should keep them near to himself. He says he will be with them; they therefore expect his presence, and if their afflictions be very great, they may on good grounds wait for his time of deliverance. And as his word cannot be broken, their trust in it will be confirmed, and their hearts will be established in waiting upon the Lord.

Lord. If their afflictions continue long he is with them all the time, making them fenfible of their own weakness, and putting forth his promised strength, both that they may endure, and may also persevere in enduring: thus he improves their patience. And because they have still a carnal nature, which cannot bear the cross, God therefore keeps it upon them, in order to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, that as they die unto fin they may live unto righteoufness. Such is the declared purpose of God in afflicting his children: he would hereby cherish these graces in them, by which communion with him is kept up; and as these grow, communion with him will grow in proportion. Faith will look more at the truth, and live more upon the faithfulness of God. Patience will depend. depend more on his arm, and the less happiness the believer can find in the creature, he will seek and will find the more in his God. The mortifying of the old man will of course make the new man more alive: for as the power of the cross of Christ is laid upon the former, the power of the life of Christ will be experienced in the latter.

But such is the goodness of God to his children under the cross, that he has given them several very particular and express promises, in order to strengthen their faith and patience. He has shewn them what sellowship they are to expect with the eternal Three in their covenant offices; for promoting which he most mercifully provided the cross. O my soul attend to this: carefully survey this rich contrivance of divine love, and when the cross is sent,

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take it up in faith, and expect to be a partaker of its covenant bleffings.

Remember, it is laid upon thee to promote communion with thy God and Saviour. The appointed trial comes. It is to give thee proof of the foundness of thy faith in Jefus, and to let thee fee by experience, that thou hast not believed in vain. Thou hast fled to him for refuge, from fin and guilt, from wrath and hell: He took thee into his protection; and now thy fafety in him is to be attacked. It will be feen, that the foundation upon which thou standest will bear thee up in an hour of temptation. If thou hast indeed fellowship with him in his glorious falvation, it will now be made manifest to thy great profit. The cross is laid upon thee, an heavy, a bitter cross: it deprives thee of all fenfible comfort; and is kept

kept upon thee till thou hast no prospect of any. Hope in creature comfort is failed. This is a sweet season for spiritual communion with thy Jesus. He has deadened the enjoyment of other things, that thy heart might be happier in him; therefore now thou art to bring the principles, laid down in the former chapters into practice. Here is a fair opportunity to make use of them: for without them a man must fink under such a cross; but through faith in the righteoufness of thy God and Saviour thou wilt not only have powerful arguments, but wilt also have powerful grace, to bear thy sufferings, patient under them, and thankful for them:

Under them thou wilt be tried— Is it good ground, upon which I have built my hope of falvation? Is

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it the rock of ages? Does it bear me up safe, and keep me unshaken in this time of trouble? Yes, bleffings, eternal bleffings on my precious Jesus: I have fled to him for refuge, and he has fet my feet upon a rock, that never can be moved: Christ my passover is sacrificed for me: in the blood of sprinkling I have put my trust, and I am safe from the destroyer: he is my propitiation, in whom I have redemption through faith in his blood: He is mine advocate also with the Father, standing in his presence as my furety: while the Father fees him and loves him, he will fee me in him and love me with the same love: Jesus is mine atonement with him, my righteousness, my fanctification, and my full redemption. O thou most lovely loving Jesus, I have often been happy in the fense

of mine interest in thee, but never fo happy as now. This crofs is fanctified indeed: for it has removed what hindered my communion with thee, and has brought me to feek thy prefence, and to enjoy thy supports, and thy comforts. I was foolish enough to wish it might pass from me; but this was mine infirmity. Pardon it my fweet Jesus, and accept mine unfeigned thanks for thy late mer-Never in my life did I find the virtue of thy facrifice in the peace of my confcience, nor had I fuch intimate communion with thee in thy finished salvation, as I have had under this cross. It tried me indeed, but the trial was to thy glory, and to my profit. I am now more fatisfied than ever, that thy falvation is infinitely perfect, and that I have my share in it: I have

have it indeed now: for I am a partaker of the things which accompany falvation. I am making use of them—I find their reality—I enjoy their sweetness—blessing and thanks and praise without ceasing be unto thee, my adorable God and Saviour.

Is it not O my foul, thy fervent prayer, that thou mayest live in holy friendship with Jesus? Why then dost thou fear his cross, which is his appointed way and means of improving thine intimacy with him, and likeness to him? O study the discovery of his love in the scriptures: and take particular notice of the promises, which he has made to his suffering brethren. Read, mark them, mix faith with them, that they may be fulfilled in thine experience. Remember, thou canst not suffer, but by his will, to which which he expects submission: he sends the cross to teach thee this lesson. It cannot hurt the, if thou dost not quarrel with it: but if thy will be resigned to his, herein thou wilt have fellowship with him; and thou wilt have reason constantly to be praying to him—Not my will? Lord, but thine be done.

Consider for the improvement of this fellowship, that thy Lord himself was exercised with the cross. He has gone before thee bearing it. He has taken the curse and wrath out of it, and has fanctified it to all his followers. In faith they must take it up, and in patience carry it, or they will not come to the kingdom. Certainly then their crucified Lord will be with them: yea, he has promised—"I will be with thee in trouble"—seek his presence, O my soul, under

under the cross-wait for communion with him-he has faid he will be with thee: expect therefore the light of his countenance, which is better than life. Do not fear the cross, fince it is to bring thee such a bleffing: it is to be the means of thy fellowship with Jesus in his fenfible support, and heavenly comfort; take it up then. Suppose it removes all thine earthly joy. Let it go. The pain of its loss is not to be compared with the joy of thy Jesus will give thee pure spirit. holy joy, and by his divine art will extract it out of pain. He afflicts, that he may comfort. He takes away fenfual, that he may give spiritual pleasure. He removes creature-love, that he may communicate more of his happy love. In mercy he chastises. He sees there is need to mortify fin. He fends

the cross for this purpose, and bleffes what he fends. It works like wholesome physic. But oh! it is bitter, it is nauseous to the taft? Why do you chaw it then? Swallow the pill. The benefit is not to be found in the mouth, but in the stomach. There it will purge bad humors. The fovereign phyfician intends it should operate upon every evil temper, which would hinder your bleffed communion with him, and should be the means of exercifing those graces, by which that communion is maintained and may be improved.

Such is the cross of Christ—taken up in faith, and carried in patience, it promotes daily fellow-ship with him; which is the greatest blessing upon earth. There is no greater in heaven: only they enjoy it by sense, and we by faith.

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But we have the same fellowship with them in Jesus, and the same communion with them in the graces of his falvation. And for these he makes way by his cross. He deadens the foul to the life of sense, that it may feel more of happiness in him. When he has withdrawn other joys, he often shines into the heart with joy unspeakable. He generally vouchfafes these his love tokens to his suffering brethren, and gives his richest cordials in their deepest distress. Each of fuch happy fouls can fay —It is good for me to fuffer with Jesus. Yes, Lord: I am thy witness: thy cross is good: it has been the means of my greatest good: for thou hast brought me by it to forfake communion with other objects, and to enjoy communion with thee in thy precious love.

love. If thou hast been pleased to take away any of my beloved objects, thou hast in much mercy supplied their place with thy presence. I have found my losses my chief gain. O my Jesus, Lord God almighty, I bless thee and adore thee for the distinguishing grace vouchfafed to me under the cross. It was entirely from thee, and the effect of thy love, that I had any patience, or any fellowship with thee in the way of fuffering. It was thy doing, and I glorify thee for enabling me to maintain peace with the Father through faith in thine obedience unto death, and for fatisfying me that my crosses were appointed and fent by covenant love. art the giver of these bleffings, and on thee I wait for the continuance of them. Whatever thou callest upon me to suffer, order it and me, VOL. II. as

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as seemeth best to thy godly wisdom; but leave me not to myself. Be always with me, my good Lord, that I may bear thy cross, and carry it patiently and profitably, thou sustaining both me and it every step of my way to heaven. Hear me, my Jesus, and answer: for without thee I can do nothing; but strengthened by thee I shall be able to bear all things, and my daily cross will keep me in daily communion with thee to my profit and to thine eternal praise. Amen.

Thus the cross of Christ is sanctified, and keeps up communion with him in the blessings of his salvation. So it does with the Father in his love. In the covenant his name is expressive of his office. He is a Father, who has every holy affection and feeling of love. He embraces in the bowels of the ten-

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derest parent all his family—Christ the head, and all the members of his body, the church. With one undivided love his heart is set upon Christ and them, and with the same bountiful hand he blesses him and them. What Christ is, they shall be. In this most gracious relation he stands to the whole houshold of faith. He is their Father, who loves and accepts them, pardons, justifies, sanctifies, and blesses them with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus.

It is hard to believe this under the cross. To cleave to him in love, as our Father, when his hand is lifted up to smite, yea when we smart under his rod, then to see love in his heart and love guiding his hand, is faith very triumphant. We are apt to look upon our sufferings as coming from the wrath of God.

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We think he must be displeased, or else he would not delight to put us to pain: upon this account we are not reconciled to the cross, but would shake it off, if we could. The scripture gives us a different view of this matter, and represents God in a more amiable light, even in the severest chastisement of his children. He is their Father, and they are his fons. This relation cannot fubfist without his chastening them. He informs them of the necessity of it; he declares to them his purpose and grace before the chastening, and he assigns the motives and ends of his proceeding. He has always the fame Father's love, and is always dealing with them as with fons. His cross is one of the chief marks of it. He fends it with a meffage of love, and it comes to them big with mercies. When

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When the Father intends an abundant communication of his love, he generally makes way for it by fome heavy cross, and when he would continue, or increase his favors, he keeps the crofs upon them. It is his appointed means of promoting fellowship with him in the graces and bleffings of his fatherly love. And it answers this end, when it is received by faith, and carried by patience: for then the believer, resting on the fure foundation laid for him in the holy life and death of Immanuel, sees the Father reconciled, and expects every promised bleffing from his Whatever cross comes, he receives it from his Father in Jesus. He holds fast this truth—God is my God—he loves me perfectly in his Son, and therefore I shall find some proof of his fatherly love in this af-H 3 fliction.

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fliction. But if his faith be weak, if he forget, or forfake for a time his foundation, then the cross will become intolerable. Murmuring will arise. The flesh will hearken to unbelief. Fretfulness will take place, and thus God will be robbed of his glory, and the believer of his comfort. It has pleased God therefore, in order to strengthen his childrens faith against these attacks, to give them many plain declarations of his invariable intention to do them good in all their afflictions. The Son is a witness for him: he was in the bosom of the Father, and knew all the purposes of his heart. He has given us a most delightful account of the Father's defign in afflicting his children—" I am, fays " he, to his disciples, the true vine, " and my Father is the husband-" man: every branch that beareth " not

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" not fruit in me, he taketh away, " and every branch that beareth " fruit, HE PURGETH IT, THAT "IT MAY BRING FORTH MORE "FRUIT." The Father looks upon all his children, as one with Christ; as much united to him, and in him, as the branches are in the vine, therefore as a wife hufbandman he takes the special charge and care of them. Every branch that does not bear fruit in Christit is not, as we read it, every branch in me, but every branch that does not bear fruit IN ME-whatever it may feem to be-in profession, a branch—in shew, a fruitful branch, yet it has no life; it was never cut off from the old dead stock, nor grafted into me the life-giving vine. The husbandman knows this well. Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted

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rooted up. He does this in an hour of trial. Then it appears, that such branches were only in appearance united to the vine: for if he had made them part of it, he would no doubt have continued them in it, but he took them away, that they might be manifest, that they were not one with the vine. This is a great part of the vine-dreffer's business—he suffers no rotten branches upon his vine. He goes over his charge and attends to every branch. If any feem to men, or to themselves to be in the vine: for hypocrites are great self-deceivers, and the felf-righteous love to be deceived, and proud nature is fond of growing into Christ by something of its own, the vine-dreffer in due time discovers their mistake, and manifests to the world that they were not branches of his grafting: for he taketh

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taketh them away: but every branch, fays Christ, that beareth fruit by its communion with me, he purgeth: by his divine husbandry he removes every thing, which would stop its growth and hinder its fruitfulness. The branches of the vine are fo weak that they always want a prop -he supports them. They often run very luxuriant-he cuts them with his pruning-knife. They have many bad humors and juices in them - those he corrects. He purges every noxious quality, and whatever is contrary to the holy nature of the heavenly vine he fubdues. Most merciful is his purpose herein. He would have the branches of his own grafting to be lively and flourishing-like the stock upon which they grow. I am the vine, fays Christ, ye are the branches. God's husbandry is to make the H 5 branches

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branches like the vine; therefore he purgeth them, in order that they may bring forth much fruit. And is this his defign? Does he afflict them entirely for their good? Does he fend every trial and trouble to purge their corruptions and to quicken their graces? Has the Lord Jefus given us fuch a pleafing view of his Father's love, affuring us that all croffes are fent by him to make us more lively and more fruitful? Since this is the case, what great reason hast thou, O my soul, to expect these blessings from the cross? Here is a promise for thy faith to rest on. A promise, which discovers the heart of thy Father, and his abundant love in afflicting thee. He would have thee not only to believe in his love, but also to enjoy it. He afflicts thee; but it is in order to thy keeping up communion

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nion with him under the crofs, and he knows it is the best means of keeping it up and of promoting it. O feek then by faith for the promised fruit. Expect in patience the rich harvest. And that thou mayest quietly submit to the Father's will in purging thee, as a branch, observe how exactly the apostle Paul agrees with his blessed master-" Furthermore we have " had fathers of our flesh, who cor-" rected us, and we gave them re-" verence, shall we not much ra-"ther be in subjection unto the "Father of spirits, and live? For "they verily for a few days cor-" rected us, after their own plea-" fure; but he for our profit, that "we might be PARTAKERS OF "HIS HOLINESS." There is a reverence due to earthly parents, and children are required to submit to their

their corrections; although herein they often confult their own will and pleasure more than their childrens profit. And is not greater reverence due to the Father of our spirits, and shall we not submit to his corrections? Especially since his defign in them is to promote the greatest dignity and highest happiness of his children, even to make them partakers of his holiness: For to partake is not only to give them a title to, but also to give them posfession of, to communicate, to have fellowship with him, to share with him, in his bolinefs. Holinefs is the Father's image in his children, by which he makes them like him, and capable of enjoying him. He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy. He chose them in Christ, and made Christ their fancti-

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fanctification. In him they partake, as branches in the vine, of his holy nature. They are one with him in righteousness and true holiness. He is the divine root, from which all the branches by the influence of the holy Spirit derive their nourishment and growth. From him is their fruit found. And the heavenly husbandman, purpofing to make the branches very fruitful, has provided effectual means. Among which the chief is his fatherly correction. This he fends to all his children, and in the tenderest love. He would have them to bring forth much fruit, that herein he may be glorified holy fruit, produced by his care and culture, and ripened by daily communications of his grace. Therefore he appoints many heavy trials and croffes, by which he defigns to bring bring them not only to believe in his love, but also to a growing enjoyment of it. He would communicate to them an increase of its bleffings. He would have them nearer to himself and more like to himself—Holy as he is holy—not in degree, but in likeness. He would teach then more fubmission to his will, for which he wifely and mercifully fuits the cross. He would improve their love to him, which he does by manifesting his to them: therefore he fends his cross to deaden their hearts to other love, that he may give them a happier sense of his. And his children have found fuffering times bleffed times. They never had fuch nearness to their Father, such holy freedom with him, and fuch heavenly refreshments from him, as under the cross. It only took away what

what stopt the increase of this happiness, which thereby was made more spiritual and exalted. The cross thus sanctified is the greatest bleffing on this fide of heaven. Because by it the Father keeps his children in the closest communion, that they have with him upon earth; by it he purges them, makes them fruitful, and partakers of his holiness; by it he crucifies the life of fense, deadens them to the world, mortifies their lusts and passions, and by it as the outward man perisheth the inward man is renewed day by day. Most blessed renewal! Daily the the Father communicates, and by means of the cross, new life, new strength, and new comfort to the inward man. By the right spirit renewed within him he learns the necessity of the daily cross—he sees the merciful appointment of it to teach

teach refignation to the Father's holy will, to work a conformity to the first born among many brethren both in fuffering and by fuffering, to bring in fensible experience of the Father's support and comfort. What bleffings are these? How great, how precious? To be branches in the vine, and to have the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the husbandman, who grafts them into him-O what an infinite mercy is this! And to be under his special care, faithfully watched over in order to remove every thing hurtful, and to bestow every thing useful, this love paffeth understanding: And to have this love to feast upon in the absence of other comforts, to have them taken away only to make. room for this, to enjoy this most plentifully, even under troubles and afflictions, and to be only purged by them

them in order to bring forth much fruit; these are triumphs of divine love. O my God and Father, I confess and deplore my frequent mistaking thy dealings with me. I did not fee they were all in love. Through mine ignorance and felfwill I thought thy cross was a punishment, and I used wickedly to despise the chastening of the Lord. Pardon thy fervant concerning this thing. Forgive mine opposition to thy cross, and subdue mine impatient defire to shake it off. Holy Father, mortify my will, and make it bow to thine. Thy will be done in me, and by me. Purge me, and make me fruitful under the cross. Chasten me, that I may be a partaker of thy holiness. I bless thee, O my God, for the defire which I have to keep up communion with thee in my fufferings: I believe thou

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thou art my perfectly reconciled Father in Jesus, and therefore trusting to thy love in him, I would take up thy cross and expect under it thy covenant bleffings. Yes, Lord. This is of grace. Thine be the praise for shewing me the need of fuffering, and of renewing me by it in the inward man to a conformity to thy holy will. I now fee thy love herein. It is as much love to crucify the outward man as to renew the inward man. I believe it in my judgment; O blessed God, let me experience it in my heart and walk. Order all my crosses, that they may work together under thee for thy glory and for my good: And if afflictions abound, let confolations abound also. I have thy promise, and I rely upon it. Let it be fulfilled unto thy fer-

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vant for thy dear Son's fake. Amen, and Amen.

This bleffed communion with the Father and the Son, which the fanctified use of the cross is made the means of promoting, is maintained by the holy Spirit: He is a person in the Godhead coequal and coeternal with the Father and with the Son. (It is his office to apply and to make effectual all covenant bleffings. Faith in the Son, and thro' him love to the Father are from his influence. He is the Lord and giver of all spiritual life, and of every spiritual enjoyment: For so the apostle teaches in his prayer for the Corinthians—The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father and the communion of the holy Ghost be with you all. This communion of the holy Ghost consisted in partaking by his means

means with the Lord Jesus Christ in his grace, and with the Father in his love. The Holy Ghost made the application. He quickened the foul, and inspired the breath of life into it, and on him it depends for every spiritual act, as much as the life of the body does on its breathing. Whoever stedfastly believes in Jesus under the cross, and experiences under it the Father's love, has this fellowship with the Father and the Son by the operation of the holy Spirit: Therefore that sweet grace, which bears up with faith in Jesus, and with patience under the Father's rod, is said to be from him—" The fruit of the Spirit is " long-suffering" - He enables the foul to wait quietly. And if the time be long and the suffering hard, he gives long patience. He does not take away the fense of pain,

pain, but he bestows strength to bear it, and by it he produces a plentiful harvest of graces and blesfings. Thus he teaches us himfelf-" Now no chastening for the " present seemeth to be joyous, but "grievous: nevertheless afterward "it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of " righteousness, unto them who are " exercised thereby" - These are the fruits of the Spirit: They are all of his producing. And they are fruits of righteoufness, which none can produce but those, who are one with Christ; and in him righteous before God. Although sense cannot perceive, how they should grow or ripen upon the cross of Christ; yet faith can. The promise is sure. And waiting faith exercised with fuffering finds many promifed fruits. O my foul, consider this precious scripture, and with close attention. Study

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Study it. Treasure it up in thy heart. It contains a rich cordial for the afflicted. Observe there is love in fending the crofs, love to be manifested by it, and heavenly fruits of love to grow upon it. Why then is fuffering fo hard? Why art thou fo little profited by it? Is it not generally barren, because thou art not looking to the word of promise, and depending upon the holy Spirit to give thee the promised fruit? Ask thyfelf therefore, especially in the hour of fuffering-Am I now expecting the communion of the Holy Ghost, that by his grace I may partake with the Son in his falvation, and with the Father in his love? Is this my present experience? There is no bearing the cross without it. Art thou then, O my foul, trusting to him for this happy fellowship, and hoping that as thou art a branch in the

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the vine, and the husbandman is now purging thee, thou mayest bring forth much fruit? And obferve, what kind of fruit it is. All the effects of being in union with Christ, and of having communion with him are called fruits of righteousness. Christ is the vine. The branch must be one with him before it can live and grow-one with him in his life and death—a partaker of his divine righteoufness—and then the branch abiding in him by the influence of the holy Spirit will be made fruitful in love, joy, peace, long-fuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He brings forth all the fruit, that is to the glory of God-And it is all peaceable fruit: for it is produced by him

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him in consequence of (covenant-) love, by which the Father is revealed as the God of peace, and the the Son as the great peace-maker, and when the holy Spirit enables the poor finner to believe this, then he gives him joy and peace in believing—being justified by faith he has peace with God through Jesus Christ. The cross soon comes after this-not to destroy, but to try this faith—not to take away, but to confirm this peace—it is fent to give proof of the foundness of faith, and to manifest the sweetness of divine love: for it comes from the God of peace, and all the fruits which he intends to produce by it are praceable, fuch as should increase the happy fense of peace in the minds of his children. And for this purpose the holy Spirit abides with them. He has revealed the Father's

Father's love in scripture, and he is a faithful witness of it to their hearts. He sheds it abroad and fatisfies them of it. Yea he gives them fenfible experience and enjoyment of it under the cross. This produces a quiet submission to his will, and an humble dependence upon his power: Which are manifested by waiting upon God in all ways and means for the grace promifed to his afflicted children. The cross requires great grace, and therefore calls forth much prayer. Suffering times are praying times. cross brings sinners upon their knees-Manasseh in affliction entreated the Lord-So did Paul-Behold, he prayeth. It keeps believers upon their knees, as the prophet witnesses-" Lord, in trouble "have they visited thee, they poured " out a prayer when thy chastening Vol. II. was

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" was upon them." The Lord himfelf declares the fame-" I will go "and return to my place, till they " acknowlege their offence, and feek " my face; in their affliction they " will feek me early." Accordingly they did feek him-" Come " fay they, and let us return unto "the Lord: for he hath torn and " he will heal us, he hath smitten, " and he will bind us up." O bleffed fruit of affliction! when fanctified by the Spirit it teaches the children of God to pray fervently, and to continue instant in prayer: It discovers the weakness of the flesh, and the rebellion of the will, and shews the necessity of drawing near to God for strength and patience. It keeps the mind in a praying frame, expecting by the grace of the Spirit communion with the Father and the Son. The cross makes

makes this communion necessary. It cannot be endured without as belief of the Father's love in Jesus, and therefore the Spirit of prayer keeps this belief in exercise, and enables the foul to plead the promile of strength to endure patients ly, and to bring forth much fruit: The promise cannot fail. They who trust in it cannot be difappointed; but shall find grace to help in time of need. As prayer is thus necessary, so the holy Spirit generally makes it fweet under the cross. Is any afflicted among you? Let him pray. Prayer is the appointed means of his comfort. If affliction fend him to God, God will meet him, and make him joyful in his house of prayer. How encouraging are these words?+ " Draw nigh to God, and he will "draw nigh to you." In every case

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case of distress, draw nigh in faith to God: He is a very present help. Seek his face, and you will find him near unto you: For the Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, nigh to hear, to answer, and to comfort. Thus his promise runs— "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord " shall answer, thou shalt cry, and "he shall say, Here I am"-What is your burden? I am present to give strength to bear it. What is your grief? Here are my comforts—Do your tribulations abound? Here are my confolations abounding also. Here I am-Ask what you will believing, and itshall bedone unto you. O what times of refreshing are these! The Holy Ghost sensibly comforts the afflicted. When they draw nigh to God, he is present to make their hearts joyful. He difpels their darkness with the light

of his countenance, and turns their mourning into joy. And thus they have not only communion with God in prayer, but also such communications of his heavenly love, that they can often say, It is good for us that we have been in trouble.

In times of trouble the wor palfo is generally sweet. All people in diffress look out for some comfort: And the holy Spirit directs believers to the scriptures. "Whatsoever things " were written aforetime, were writ-" ten for our learning, that we thro' " patience and comfort of the scrip-"tures might have hope." The afflicted feel their want of patience and comfort, which puts them upon careful hearing and reading of the good word of God. want to know what it says of their case, and when they meet a suitable promise, then they have a ground

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of hope. Their present trials require them to feek for fomething more than the truth of the promise. This being credited, they therefore expect the promised bleffing. When the famine was in Canaan, Jacob and his family could not have been kept alive by believing there was corn in Egypt: They must either fetch it, or die. Trouble calls for the experience of the promifed bleffings, and when they are received at fuch a time they are fweet indeed. They feel, as eafe does after pain. When the holy Spirit applies the comfort, the promife, by which he applies it, is precious. It is like a reviving cordial to a fainting heart, + O how fweet are thy words unto my taft, yea fweeter than honey unto my month. Honey is fweet: But the word is sweeter. When through patience

patience and comfort of the scriptures the afflicted believer enjoys the good of the promise, then he can say—Now I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me: Let I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort according to thy word unto thy servant.

Sweet is the comfort which the afflicted receive from God the comforter under the cross: not only in suffering, but also after it. AFTER-ward also "it yieldeth the peace-"able fruit of righteousness." He, who carries the cross of Christ does not labor in vain, and spend his strength for nought: But he is bearing forth good seed. If he sow it in tears, yet he shall reap in joy. The Lord looks at the fruit, and intends to bring forth much of it by I 4

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the cross: We are apt to look at the suffering, and to forget the fruit. He has the end in view in the use of all means; and the holy Spirit has revealed this clearly, that we might depend upon him for receiving the proper fruit of affliction. The Lord fays, he led his people through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery flying ferpents and scorpions, and drought; that he might humble them, and that he might prove them, to do them good AT THE LATTER END. He intended to do them good. This was first in his heart. the way in which he would do it: he would lead them through many afflictions; by which they should find at the latter end, how good God was to them. The promise of this was their encouragement to bear the cross, till they reaped the fruit.

fruit. In like manner the Lord fays to the afflicted Jews-"I know " the thoughts that I think to-"wards you, faith the Lord, "thoughts of peace, and not of evil, " to give you AN EXPECTED END" -fuch an end as you would wish, and having my promise, such as you may fafely hope for-my thoughts indeed are not as your thoughtsyou think I have cast you off, and that your present cross is to crush you-no, I mean to do you good by it—and so the end will prove wait a little in faith, and all will come to an happy iffue.

Are these scriptures the truth of God? Has the eternal Spirit promised in them, that although the bearing of the cross be very painful, yet it is very profitable? Will he afterwards cause them to bring forth much fruit, who have been

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exercised with it? Art thou then waiting, O my foul, under all thy troubles for the promised end? Dost thou expect it, and in patience tarry the Lord's leifure. Canst thou look back, and fee how merciful the dealings of thy God have been—how gracious his rod—how loving his correction? Canst thou look forward under every cross, perfuaded, that God will do thee good at the latter end? That he will cause many peaceable fruits to grow upon this feemingly barren tree? Yea, that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment shall work for thee an eternal weight of glory, far more excellent than can be conceived? O God the Holy Ghost, I do believe it: I would not doubt of the truth of the promife in thy word, nor of the truth of thy grace in my heart: I therefore

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fore befeech thee, O thou Spirit Jehovah, to enable me to keep up communion with thee in all my trials, that I may bring forth thefe peaceable fruits of righteoufness. Thou art the giver of every grace. I acknowlege thee to be the author of my spiritual life: I was dead in trespasses and fins, and thou hast quickened me. It is of thy mere gift, that I have any faith, and that upon the trial it was found to be true faith: I bless thee for this grace, and humbly pray for the continuance and for the increase of it. Meet me in the use of all means, and enable me to grow in faith, rooted and grounded in Christ Jefus, that I may also grow in love to his Father and to my Father. O thou divine revealer of his heavenly love, shed it abroad more abundantly in my heart, that I may learn

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learn more refignation to his will, more subjection to his authority, and more submission to his rod. acknowlege thee, O holy-making Spirit, to be the teacher of patience, and what I have learnt was thy revelation. It was in thy strength that I was enabled to go on with any quietness bearing my cross. Thy grace made me willing, and nothing elfe can keep me willing, to have the flesh crucified with its affections and lufts. O God put forth thine almighty power, and enable me to part with every thing, which would hinder my fellowship. with the Father and the Son. 1. defire to to walk this day, as to have growing fellowship with the eternal Three, and I defire it through thine influence. O God the Holy. Ghost, carry on thy work. Exalt and purify my faith and patience and every grace: if it be thy will to do this under the cross, O make me willing and able to bear it. Let every cross bring forth richer and riper fruit, until thou give me an exceeding great and eternal harvest of glory. I ask this in the name of Jesus, and I expect an answer of grace through the Father's love in him, to whom with thee, O blessed Spirit, three persons in one Godhead be equal glory, worship and praise, now, and for ever. Amen.

Meditate, O my soul with seriousness upon this great subject. Study the scripture account of the cross. The knowlege of it enters into the very essence of the peace and comfort of thy walk. Thou canst not run away from the cross: thou canst not cast it off: remember, if thou wilt be Christ's disciple, thou

thou must take it up daily, and follow him. If it be very heavy and very grievous, yet it will not hinder thee from following him. He carried the heaviest part for thee-he endured the curfe and punishment due to thy fins-he left no wrath for thee to suffer-Bleffed be his love, the cross has no curse in it now-thy sufferings are all fent from love—and his love will help thee to bear them and to profit by them: for he has promised to bless and fanctify them to his people. And he makes them a bleffing indeed. Never on this fide of heaven does he give them such near and happy communion with himself as under the cross. O read then, and study what is revealed in scripture concerning it. Go over it again and again. Learn well, and inwardly digest the doctrine of

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the cross of Christ-the necessity -the benefit-the bleffings of it. Meditate and feed upon the sweet promises relating to it: mix faith with them, that they may nourish and strengthen thee in time of need. But never forget, that thy cross, be it what it will, is appointed for thee in covenant love. It is the portion allotted thee by thy heavenly Father-decreed in weight and meafure, to an atom thou shalt not bear it one moment longer, than he has determined and many precious fruits it shall produce. Thou wilt find fuffering times growing times-growth in faith and patience, in mortification to fin, and in fellowship with the ever blessed Trinity. The author of thy faith puts it to the trial: it comes out of the lion's den unhurt: it comes out of the fiery furnace refined. God

is glorified hereby, and thou art strengthened. He sends the cross to teach thee patience, and he continues it for the exercise and for the improvement of the same grace. He intends by his chastening to crucify the flesh, and to mortify thy members which are upon the earth. In love he takes away fenfual, that he may give thee spiritual joys. He does not hate thee, but love guides every froke of his chastening. He is only weakening thine attachment to earthly things, that he may increase thy communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. O what bleffings are these! Meditate, O my foul, much and often upon them. Pray for the experience of them in time of need: and be affured with all these helps, the cross will be exercise hard enough for thy patience. Thou canst carry it only in the

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the strength of almighty grace. May the Lord strengthen thee from day to day to run the race set before thee, till thou win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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The believer exercifed with the inward cross learns to walk more bumbly with his God.

Ways a burden alike heavy. God gives his children a little refpite. After they have been long tried he fometimes removes their trouble, and gives them ease and outward prosperity. Their sun arises, as it does in nature. After many cold and dark days a fine season comes—finer for coming after them. The sky grows clear and serene, the air is soft and refreshing, the sun shines with warm and enlivening rays. Every thing looks pleasant, and smiles around

you.

you. So it is in the kingdom of grace. The believer may not be always in heaviness through manifold afflictions. He has his times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. He prospers and is in health. The bleffing of God is upon his fubftance. Every thing that he takes in hand fucceeds. He is happy in his circumstances and happy in his family. He fees the goodness of God in these mercies, and he is thankful. But if the heavenly Father sometimes indulge his children with the removal of the outward cross, yet he never does with the inward. They carry it all their days, and an heavy burden it is. So long as they are in the body, while they are in this tabernacle, they do grown being burdened: for

The INWARD CROSS is the fault and

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and corruption of finful nature, which doth remain in the regenerate, and is their continual grief and plague: because it is always opposing their holy and happy walk with God. It is called in scripture

THE FLESH, the whole man being carnal, and full of lusting a-gainst the Spirit.

THE OLD MAN, being the first in us, before the new man is created by the spirit of regeneration.

A BODY OF SIN, made up completely of members and appetites, in which there is not only an abfence of all good, but also a propensity to all evil, insomuch that nothing can move or stir in this body, but what is sinful.

THE LAW OF SIN, because sin rules and governs the natural man.

INDWELLING SIN, because it dwells

dwells in the whole man, both in

foul and body.

CONCUPISCENCE, OR LUST, which the apostle says, he should not have known to be sin, unless the law had said—Thou shalt not covet or lust.

This fallen nature is also said to be corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, to be contrary to the Spirit, to rebel against the law of God, and not to be subject to it, neither indeed can be. "This corruption of nature doth remain, according to our reformers, Art. 9. Yea in them that are regenerated, where by the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, froneema sarkos, which fome do expound the wisdom, fome fensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh is not subject to the law of

"God: and although there is no

" condemnation for them, that be-

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" lieve and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concu-

" piscence and lust hath of itself the

"nature of fin. And in the 15;

" Art. of Christ alone without sin,

" they fay, that all we the rest, al-

"though baptized and born again

"in Christ, yet offend in many

"things, and if we fay, we have no

" fin, we deceive ourselves and the

" truth is not in us."

The compilers of our articles were holy men, and taught of God. They spake his mind and will according to the oracles of truth. And it will be a great comfort to a poor soldier, wearied with fighting against those lusts, which war against his soul, to find that the best Christians in every age have been engaged in the same holy war. This will mightily encourage him to take to him the whole armor

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armor of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day, and

having done all to fland.

Attend then, O my foul, to the law and to the testimony. Pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Defire grace to submit to the truth of God, that whatever he teaches plainly and expresly in his word, thou mayest believe it, and abide by it. Read and pray, till thou art satisfied, and the conviction of thy mind influence thy heart and walk. Art thou to carry the inward cross all the way to heaven? Is there no discharge in this war?—No truce to be made, not even a cessation of arms? But art thou to be fighting on the good fight of faith, till the captain of thy falvation take thee out of the field of battle? O hard fervice! To be night and day—at home and abroad

—in the closet and in the church -at hearing the word and meditating upon it—fasting and praying at the shop and at the exchange every where and at all times forced to be in arms against the assaults of indwelling fin; this is a warfare terrible indeed to flesh and blood. The length of it—never ended fo long as breath is in the body. The painfulness of it—confisting in being at war with a man's felf; and in refifting his bosom fins and strongest appetites—What discouragements are these, from entering into, and from continuing in this battle? Why should it be wondered then, that some persons, who only follow the camp, and are not of it, should repent, when they fee this war and return to Egypt? Or that others, pretending to be on Christ's fide, but never one with him, should dream

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dream of shaking off this cross, and of fitting down here in a land of perfect peace? This is the cowards paradife. They want to rest quiet on this fide of Jordan, and would not go over with Jesus to fight for the promised land. O dear Saviour, keep thy noble army from this delufion of Satan: So long as they are in the body of fin and death, make them good foldiers of Christ Jesus, resisting unto blood striving against sin. For so long must we be in this hot battle. It is decreed by the fovereign will of God-and he is always of one mind. He has revealed it in his word of truth, that the corruption of nature doth remain in his regenerate children, they have an old man and a new, they have flesh and spirit, they have nature and grace, and he has defcribed the combat, which is to last VOL. II. through

through life between these two. The beloved apostle bears a clear testimony. He is speaking of those whom the blood of Jesus Christ cleanfeth from all fin, and who had fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and who proved the truth of this by their walking in the light: He puts himself among them; and declares-" If we fay, that we have " no fin now, we deceive ourselves " and the truth is not in us"-If WE fay-He faith not, If thou fay, as if he spake of some particular person-Nor if ye say, as if he intended ordinary Christians alone-But if we apostles, or whatever we be fay fo, if any of us, If I for instance should think I had no fin now, who am a faint of an hundred years old: Because I was a great favorite of the Lord Christ, and have been a great sufferer for him:

Or

Or because I have lived blameless before men, and have been a witness for the truth in my writings, and am ready to feal it with my blood: If upon account of any thing done by me, or in me, of any real excellency or attainment, I should fancy myself in a state of finless perfection, the holy Ghost charges me with felf-deceit. A dreadful delusion! arising from the pride of my heart, and its rebellion against God, and discovering the most gross ignorance of God's righteousness in the holy law, and of Christ's righteousness in the glorious gospel: But if I was to say, as well as to think it; if I should tell any body-Now I have no fin-I am perfect-Now, at this time, I have received the fecond benefit, and a clean heart: For ever fince I received it, I have had nothing stirring K 2

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in me for one year, for two, twenty, forty years, but love, pure love to God—God is in all my thoughts, and nothing but God—I do his will in earth, as it is done in heaven: If I should say so, I should tell a great lie: For I should deceive myself, and the truth would not be in me.

Are these indeed the very words of the apostle? "If we say, that "we have no sin now, we deceive "ourselves, and the truth is not in "us." Can no other sense be fairly put upon them, but that the holy John had sin in him at every given moment of his life? Is this the plain literal meaning of the passage? As it certainly is, observe then, O my soul, the decisive evidence given here by the Holy Ghost concerning the inward cross. Pray for his teaching that thou mayest understand

derstand, and pray for his grace that thou mayest profit from, this scripture. Here is his infallible record concerning St. John and all highly favoured believers-He afferts, that there was no time of their lives, in which they were free from indwelling fin: God forbid then, that I should think I had no fin. He avers, that if they should fay they had none, they were deceived, and that if they should stand to it, as popish mystics, and protestant perfectionists do, the searcher of hearts declares that they lie, and do not the truth—the truth is not in them: For the father of lies has flattered them and drawn them into felf-idolarry, with a wicked defign to corrupt their minds from the fimplicity that is in Christ. Beware, O my soul, of this deceit: The Holy Ghost has K 3 warned

warned thee of it. He forefaw how the first fin would break out in after times, and pride would perfuade men that they were perfect; he therefore so guarded this scripture that none can mistake it, but fuch as turn away their ears from the truth. He put all the words in the present tense, least any should think he was speaking of time past, or of what men were before the blood of Christ had cleansed them. If we now say-WE, who now have fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and are walking in the light of their countenance—fay that WE NOW HAVE NO SIN, not had none formerly, he is not speaking of that: If he was the Holy Ghoft understands grammar; and can make no mistake in expressing himself, he would certainly have used the past tense, but he uses the present, now HAVE

HAVE NO SIN, fo as not to want the cleanfing blood of Jesus this moment as much as ever-if we have any fuch thoughts WE NOW DE-CEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT NOW IN US. How forcible and strong is his testimony from the mouth of John? And the fense, as well as the grammar shews, that he is speaking of believers, and that there is sin in them: For throughout the chapter he treats of the very fame persons, and describes not what they were before, but what they are fince they received the grace of God. They were cleanfed from all fin by the blood of the lamb, were admitted into communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit, and they enjoyed this communion, walking in the light, as God is in the light —these are the persons here mentioned—of whom God fays, they K 4 had

had fin still in them, indwelling fin, the fault and corruption of nature still remained in them, and if they fancied it did not, they would be fadly deceived—they would entirely mistake the covenant of grace, which was to bring finners fenfible of their wants and miseries to live out of themselves upon the fulness of the God-man-they would forget their own character, under which alone they can be faved, falvation being only for finnersthey would fall into the crime of the devil, by pride exalting themfelves against the person and work of the incarnate God-and they would quite pervert the law and the gospel: For in order to maintain their inherent perfection, they are forced to legalize the gospel, and to make it confift of certain terms and conditions, upon the performance

ance of which finners shall be faved, and then in order to comfort themfelves with their having performed these terms and conditions, they are forced to turn rank Antinomians: They lessen the evil of sin, they excuse it in themselves, and make just nothing of it. They call it by feveral pretty foft names, fuch as infirmity, frailty, excrefcence, and at last they get quite rid of it, by laying it upon the devil, and by terming it an injection of old fatan. And thus they deceive themselves into perfection, and infift upon it that they have no fin, although they have enough in them to damn the whole word. O God, open the eyes of these self-deceivers, and bring them into the way of truth.

Such is the clear evidence of the holy Spirit: He afferts that the greatest believers, while in the body,

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have

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have fin in them. Dost thou yield, O my foul, to his testimony? Art thou fully convinced of it from the work of his grace, as well as from the word of his truth? Dost thou feel indwelling fin? Is it the plague of thy heart, and the burden of thy life? When thou art willing to walk humbly with thy God, is it continually in thy way, raising objections, putting difficulties, and fuggesting hinderances? Is it like a heavy weight prefling thee down in thy race, that thou canst not run fo long, or fo fast, as thou couldst wish? Since this is indeed thy daily crofs, and the bearing of it the hardest part of thy warfare, O read with diligence the scripture account of it. Take notice of the Lord's champions, how they felt under this burden, from whence they derived Arength to bear it, and had comfort

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comfort under it. Hear the man after God's own heart crying out -" Mine iniquities are gone over "my head, as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me"— David had a heavy load: He was ready to fink, and he could not cast it off. He could not go into his closet, or to the house of God: He could not fit upon his throne, or go in and out before his family, but this grievous cross so bowed him down greatly, that he went mourning all the day long. The burden of it was intolerable, and would have crushed him under it; if he had not learned, how to cast it on the Lord-" Make haste, " fays he, to help me, O Lord my " falvation." Here he found relief. The prayer of faith was heard, and God was the strength of his falvation.

Under

Under the same burden a new testament saint went groaning all his days. He had a hard conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and he has left the account of it upon record. Bleffed be God for the feventh of the Romans. We there read of the inward cross, with which all the children of God are exercifed. In the very same Paul there was delight in the law of God after the inward man, but he found another law in his members, rebelling against the law of God—the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing, never ceased to affault the spirit with its vile thoughts, legal workings, and rebellious inclinations when he had a will to do good, he could not do it so perfectly, as he defired—his best moments were never free from the inroads of indwelling fin: therefore in the bitterness

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terness of his soul he cried out-"O wretched man that I am"-O! that figh came from the bottom of his heart-I know what he felt-he groaned being burdenedweary and tired with this continual conflict he looked out for deliver-"Who shall deliver me "from the body of this death?" He faw by faith his almighty Saviour, and in him expected everlasting victory—"I thank God through " Jesus Christ our Lord." He rested upon Christ in the battle, and through him waited for deliverance, knowing that one day he should be made more than conqueror.

Well then, O my foul, here is comfort. If the corruption of nature be thy cross; so it was to David, and so it was to Paul. Thy case is not singular. It is common to e-

very

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very foldier who is fighting under the banner of Christ. This cross is unavoidable: because it is in thy bosom. It is thine inmost selfthy whole nature, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Thou hast not an atom of thy body, nor the least motion or stirring of. any faculty in thy foul, but fin is in it; and therefore it is capable of being a plague to the new man. The Holy Ghost speaks thus of the inward warfare-" This I fay then, " walk in the spirit, and ye shall " not fulfil the lusts of the flesh: " for the flesh lusteth against the " fpirit, and the spirit against the "flesh, and these are contrary the " one to the other, fo that ye can-" not do the things that ye would." These words are addressed to the Galatians, who were believers, and called into the liberty of the gospel, but

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but by false teaching they were under a great temptation. They had begun in the spirit but they thought of being perfected in the flesh. They set out with salvation by faith, but expected falvation at last by works. Among other arguments to convince them of their mistake here is one unanswerable, namely, No works of ours can fave! a finner but fuch as are perfect, no works of ours are perfect, therefore they cannot fave a finner. And that none of them are perfect is certain, because in every one of them there is fomething of the flesh, of corrupt nature as well as fomething of the spirit and of spiritual nature. These two are contrary as life and death, and they are always in action, every moment the one lusting against the other: so that ho believer can do the things, which

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which he would, so perfectly as the

holy law requires.

How grievous must this inward cross be to a real believer? For it confifts in the opposition, which he finds within him, to God and to the things of God. The flesh ever lusteth against the spirit, the old man against the new. There is a continual war between these contrary powers. The flesh is a complete body of fin armed with every member and instrument of rebellion, that can refift the motions and actions of the new man. There is darkness in the understanding always clouding the light of the glorious gospel, and therefore we know but in part. The will of the flesh always opposes the holy will of God. There is enmity in the heart working against the love of God and of his will. There is pride to weaken

weaken humility-anger to oppose meekness-the carnal mind to fight against spiritual-mindedness. When the spirit is willing the flesh is weak. When you draw near to God in prayer, the imagination will not be confined: it will wander after a thousand vain objects. When you are hearing the word, it will disturb your attention with its unaccountable excursions. It is so sportive and flighty, that you cannot keep it within any bounds. Is it not fo, O my foul? Art thou not fensible of this heavy cross? Dost thou not find fomething in thee always refifting and weakening the exercise of thy graces? and is not this the great plague of thy life? Can there be a greater, than to carry about with thee a finful nature, daily trying to hinder thee in thy holy walk, and happy communion with God?

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God? O how much does it concern thee then to be well skilled in bearing this cross, and in behaving under it as a good soldier of Christ Jefus? And to this end the principles before laid down are absolutely necessary. Without them thou canst not rightly understand the nature of indwelling fin, and canst not possibly gain victory over it. Only the doctrines of grace received into thy heart can enable thee to walk with God under this cross. Call to mind then what was agreed upon in the covenant of the Trinity, and was fulfilled in the perfon and work of Immanuel for thy peace with the Father, and for thy returning to him in love, and has been applied to thee by the holy Spirit, who has given thee faith in Jesus, and has manifested the love of the Father in him: thou art there-

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therefore now one with thy covenant head in him complete and perfect, although thou art in thyfelf still a finner. Thou hast a body of fin, through the lufting of which thou art not able to keep the holy law according to its full demands in any one instance. But thou art before the Father, what thy furety is. He fees thee in him, without spot, or wrinkle, or any fuch thing-accepted as he is-beloved with the fame love-looked upon with the same joy-and blesfed with all spiritual bleffings in him. Thy furety lived for thee: thou hast the righteousness of God for thy justification. Thy surety died for thee: in him thou art as truly dead unto fin, as Christ himfelf is. Thy furety rose again, and took possession of spiritual and eternal life for thee. He was delivered for thine offences, and raised again for thy justification. Thou shalt reign with him, as certainly as he has now the crown upon his own head. Such is the perfect falvation, which is for thee; although thou art still the subject of sin: for thy pardon is without exception or reserve - All trespasses are freely forgiven. Thy justification to life is absolute: for it is God himself that justifieth. He chose thee in Jesus, that thou shouldst be holy and without blame before himand so thou art. As a member in his body thou art without blemish. Here is thy relief under the inward cross. The Father chose thee in his Son, looks upon thee in him, and deals with thee according to covenant love: there is therefore now no condemnation to thee, who art in Christ Jesus. With the sweet fense sense of this upon thy conscience, persuaded that God is at peace with thee, take up the inward cross. In this delightful view fee the curfe removed. Thou hast no reason to fear wrath or death or hell. Victory over all fins and enemies is certain. Daily, eternal victory is promised. In this faith follow the noble army, who carried this cross to their graves. Fight as they did, looking unto Jesus. Sin is in thee: it was in them; but they looked upon it as a vanquished foe, slain, and put to death, when Jesus died for fin once. Likewise reckon thou also thyself to be in him dead unto fin-freed from the condemning fentence of the law—freed from the dreadful stroke of justice by his death—freed as truly as he is—and therefore thou art no more liable, than he is, to be condemned and punished.

punished. And for the strengthening of this faith, feek for fellowthip with him in his death. It is thy privilege, as thou art planted in the likeness of his death to derive power and efficacy from it daily to put fin to death. The more stedfally thou believest, that thou art one with him in his death, the more wilt thou find thy finful nature crucified with him. Communion is always according to the faith of union with Christ. The frongest faith must have the strongest hold of him, and thereby draw the most virtue from him. Its true as our faith increases, we become more spiritual; and we see corruption more, as we fee motes in the funbeams. The fenses of the new man by exercise gain a quicker perception of fin-we become all over tender as the eye-jealous of the motionsmotions—yea of the appearance of evil. This is real growth. Sin is more felt, in order that the power of Jesus may be put forth to make us hate it, refift it, and overcome it more. As believers are more fenfible of their sinfulness in the first Adam, so they grow up into the fecond Adam the Lord from heaven: they bear the cross of the corruption of the first, which leads them to constant fellowship with the second—in his death, for the pardon of their corruption—in the power of his death to mortify fin, that it may not have dominion over them.

Corruption is in thee, and it will strive for dominion. Thy sins will sometimes siercely assault. Their allies, the world and the devil, will join them with stratagems and sorce; when the battle is hot, and thou art weak, then it behoves thee

to live by faith upon Jesus as thy furety, now acting for thee in heaven, as he acted for thee upon earth. He is gone up, as thy high priest, to carry thy name within the veil. He bears it upon the ephod on his shoulders, and upon the breast plate on his heart: his power and his love are engaged for thee, now he is in glory. He stands in the presence of God, as thy representative. The Father sees thee in him: and thou art in his fight what thy forerunner is. As he stands there, so dost thou standrighteous as he is righteous-holy as he is holy-beloved as he is beloved-and shalt be bleffed as he is bleffed. View by faith thy nature in him, exalted and glorified, and for the joy fet before thee in him take up thy cross. It is a heavy burden-it is a hard warfare. True.

But

But confider, who shall lay any thing to thy charge for indwelling fin? It is God that justifieth thee from it. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is rifen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for thee. He appears in the presence of God for thee, as thine interceffor. He is always in court to represent thy person, and to carry thy cause, especially as to what concerns sin. "If any of us fin, fays the beloved "disciple, we have an advocate " with the Father Jesus Christ the " righteous, and he is the propitia-"tion for our fins:" in this office he is tkilful and faithful, and compassionate. He has thine interest at heart—thy fafety, thy comfort under this cross, and thy victory over it. His very glory is fo inter-. VOL. II. woven

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woven with thine, that they are one: yea the advocate and his clients form but one mystical body, of which every member is, what the head is. O my God and Saviour, I bless thee and worship thee for acting for me as mine advocate and intercessor in heaven. Increase, I befeech thee, my faith, that I may fee more of the glory of thine office, and may make more use of it, in the bearing of mine inward cross. Olet thy faithful witness abide with me to enable me without doubt or wavering to trust in what thou hast done for me upon earth, and to draw comfort from what thou art now doing for me in heaven. Into thy hands I defire to commit my cause. Lord, undertake for me. Be furety for thy fervant for good, and guide me with thy counsel, till thou bring me to thy glory. I ask this

this for thy mercies sake. Amen. Is this the true state of the case? Is it certain from the word of God? Is it confirmed from matter of fact? Did the highest believer upon earth experiencethis inward cros? When his conscience summoned him to the bar of God, and put him upon enquiring what he would plead there for his justification, had he any thing to urge but the facrifice and righteousness of the ever bleffed Immanuel? And is not this thy plea, O my foul? Dost not thou find fo much weakness and infirmity in thy holy things, that thou wouldst feek atonement for the iniquity of them through the intercession of the great high priest? And thou wouldst not think of standing before the throne to claim eternal life, as the reward due to thine own holiness. Is not this L 2 thine

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thine experience? If it be, then

take up thy cross in this

FAITH. It is thy grief, that fin is in thee. The motions and luftings of it are thy burden. The refifting and opposing them is thy continual warfare. And thou hast no prospect before thee of enjoying perfect deliverance from this heavy cross, until death release thee. Bleffed be God for the falvation that is in Christ Jesus. There is a provision made in the covenant of grace for the pardon of indwelling fin, for victory over it daily, and for the eternal destruction of the whole body of fin: It shall have no existence in the members, any more than it has in their glorified head. Here is comfort for thee, O my foul, of God's own providing, and of God's own applying. When it is applied to thy heart, the cross will

will belight. Observe carefully what is revealed concerning the being of fin in the best Christians, and concerning the pardon of it. The Holy Ghost declares, it dwells in them, but they are forgiven ALL trespasses they are in Christ without spot or wrinkle or any fuch thing-in the first Adam they are heirs of fin, death and hell, in the second Adam the Lord from heaven they are heirs of righteousness, life and glory. He is their covenant-head: And they are before God, what he is. This is the record of truth—YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM. Abide by it, O my foul. Give it full credit, and boldly plead it against all the chargesof guilt, and fears of wrath-

"It is true; I have sin in me, but it is pardoned. God has for- given me ALL trespasses. I stand

L 3 "under-

[&]quot; before him in my furety, who

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" undertook for me, and I am per-" feet in him. The Father chose " me in his Son: He looks upon "the face of his beloved, and fees " me in him. In him he is well-" pleased, so he is with me. As "he loves him, fo he loves me. "This is the glorious privilege, " which by faith I now enjoy. I " deny fight and sense; and I stick " to the word of God. I adhere " Arictly to its testimony concern-" ing me, believing myself to be " dead indeed unto fin in Christ, " and in him absolutely freed from "guilt and condemnation. The " Father is at peace with me, and " he loves me in his Son, and with "the fame love with which he "loves him-His Father and my Father. With this persuasion I " go to war with my corruptions." " I fee their traiterous designs. They -dapun ,

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"They are fighting against every " thing that is dear and precious to " my foul. But having the pro-" mised grace of the almighty Sa-" viour for my help, I defire to fet " upon them in his name. I know " he has them among mine other " enemies under his feet, and I " have his word for it that he will " put them under mine. Yea, "Lord I believe, and on thy faith-" ful promise I trust this day. Al-" though I must carry my cross, " yet I bless thee and worship thee " for removing curse and wrath " from it: I can now take it up as " thy foldier and fight against it in "thy strength, expecting victory " from thee, and to thy glory. O " my God, fave me from indwell-"ing fin. Let me feel it my bur-"den. Glorify thy grace in me, " and by me, that being endued " with

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" with power from on high I may hold out resisting and conquering

"it, till thou give me everlasting

" victory."

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If this, O my foul, be thy conflant dependence, then the cross will become light. Guilt makes it heavy. The curse in it makes it intolerable: But if by faith thou canst see guilt and curse removed, then it will be no hinderance to thee in thy heavenly walk, but will daily call forth into use and exercise those graces, which will help thee forward, and especially

PATIENCE. Here is great need of patience—a continual war—and within thee—thine own bosom the seat of it—and thine own lusts carrying it on and maintaining it. The more spiritual thou art, the more wilt thou feel this inward conflict. The more thou growest into

Christ,

Christ, the more will thy corruptions stir and move-they will be thy continual plague, fo that thou wilt not be able to draw any comfort from what thou art in thyself. Here is exercise for patience. Every where indwelling fin is present with thee: Upon every temptation ready with its flatteries to entice, and with its power to break out into act and deed. The opposing it, is like cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye-as contrary to nature, and as painful. The hand and the eye cannot be destroyed twice, but inbred lusts overcome a thousand times are not in the least discouraged from warring against the soul. Like the troubled fea, never at rest, they are always casting up some sinful mire and dirt. What canst thou do without faith in the redeemer's blood,

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blood, without patience to wait for the redeemer's strength. Every moment there is need of faith and patience, and every moment if these graces be exercised they will be im-The bearing of the cross continually, and fighting under it on the fide of God will also be the means of teaching thee

THE TRUE SPIRITUAL MORTI-FICATION, which does not confift in fin not being in thee, nor in its being put upon the cross daily, nor yet in its being kept upon it. There must be something more to establish perfect peace in thy conscience; and that is the testimony of God concerning the body of fin. He has provided for thy perfect deliverance from it in Christ. Every thing needful for this purpose was finished by him upon the cross. He was thy furety. He suffered for thee.

thee. Thy fins were crucified with him and nailed to his cross. They were put to death, when he died: for he was thy covenant head, and thou as a member of his body wast legally represented by him, and art indeed dead to fin by his dying to fin once. The law has now no more right to condemn thee, a believer, than it has to condemn him. Justice is bound to deal with thee, as it has with thy rifen and afcended Saviour. If thou dost not thus fee thy complete mortification in him, fin will reign in thee. No fin can be crucified either in heart or life, unless it be first pardoned in conscience: because there will be want of faith to receive the strength of Jesus, by whom alone it can be crucified. If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power. If the believer does not fee

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fee his perfect deadness to fin in Jesus, he will open a wide door to unbelief: and if he be not perfuaded of his completeness in Christ, he gives room for the attacks of felfrighteous and legal tempers. If Christ be not all in all: self must still be looked upon as some thing great, and there will be food left for the pride of felf-importance and felf-fufficiency. So that he cannot grow into the death of Christ in fenfible experience, farther than he believes himfelf to be dead to fin in Christ. The more clearly and stedfastly he believes this, as the alife, unless it be find perhip alfloq

I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, in proportion will hecleave to Christ, and receive from him greater power to crucify sin. This believing view of his absolute mortification in

Christ

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Christ is the true gospel method of mortifying sin in our own persons.

Examine then, O my foul, the mistakes which thou hast made, and the temptations which thou art under, concerning this leading truth in thy walk. Pray to thy God for his wisdom to guide thee. Without it thou wilt be afraid, where no fear is. Thou wilt be enclined to think this doctrine rather encouraging to fin: because it seems to carnal reason to take off thy mind from watchfulness against it, and from praying for victory over it. But be affured this is a great error. If thou art not complete in Christ, thou never canst be complete. Seek for the death of fin where thou wilt, it is not to be found but in his death. Try to conquer it upon any other principle, than faith in his death, the very attempt is finful, and

and proves thee to be under the law. Unless thou art one with him in his death, there can be no pardon of fin, and consequently no victory over it. O fear not then to lay the whole weight of thy falvation upon Jesus. Depend on him, as dying to fin for thee, and look at thyself dead to fin in him-as completely dead to it, as he is. Read the testimony of the holy Spirit. Study the infinite, the everlasting fufficiency of his death for thine absolute freedom from guilt and condemnation. Trust without wavering: be not afraid to view the everlasting perfection of thy deliverance in Jesus, and this will weaken the tyranny, and will crucify the power of fin. This will, and nothing else can. Read the fixth of the Romans, and pray for the Spirit of revelation to open it to thee. There

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There thou wilt discover the true way to mortify fin. It is by believing, that thou art planted together with Christ in his death: from thence only thy pardon flows, from thence thy daily victory is received, and from thence thy eternal victory will be perfected. Fight on, foon thou shalt be, what Christ now is. The member shall be perfectly like the head. O glorious prospect! Thou shalt be with him and like him-spotless and fair, as Jesus, righteous and holy, happy in body and foul. Thou shalt see him as he is, and awaking after his likeness thou shalt be satisfied with it. Take up thy cross for the joy here set before thee. Bear it in faith. It will be light and easy to thy pardoned conscience: yea, the carrying of it in patience will bring forth many peaceable fruits of righteoufness:

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ness: Among the rest there is one, which in the sight of God is of great price, and which is daily improved by the inward cross, namely

HUMILITY, which confifts in the right knowlege of ourselves, not only of what we have been, but also of what we now are. The best and holiest man upon earth has a corrupt fallen nature: he has flesh still which is always lusting against the spirit. While he is alive to God he feels it. He is sensible of the inward conflict. Dead men indeed feel nothing. A dead corps has no fense of the worms which are eating it up. He that has these lusts in him and warring against his foul, and yet does not feel them, cannot be spiritually alive. A natural man has no fense of them, because they are in him, as worms in a dead body: just so is it with the

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the perfectionist. But so soon, and fo long, as he lives to God, he will perceive them. If he be in happy communion with God, indwelling fin is present to interrupt the enjoyment. If he exercise any grace, this befetting fin tries to weaken its actings. If he fet about any duty, it will hinder him from doing it fo perfectly, as God requires, and as he could wish. The abiding fense of these truths will keep down pride. The believer will fee nothing of his own to trust in, no faith or hope or love, no faithfulness to grace, no holy obedience: all is stained and polluted. He is forced to cry out of his best duties unclean-unclean. In this school the disciple learns to walk humbly with his God. The more he knows of himself, the more humble he becomes. And he grows in this heavenly heavenly grace, the more he is acquainted with the mercy of God in Jefus. This learnt by divine teaching keeps the believer meek and lowly in his own eyes. Nothing foftens and melts the foul into holy tenderness like the sense of God's mercy. A man who feels the plague of his own heart is never truly humbled, until he be pardoned. But when he is justified from all things in Christ, in him a partaker of all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven, when he fees all his falvation of grace, of free fovereign grace, flowing from the absolute favor of electing love, and bestowed upon him, as unworthy an object, as ever did or can partake of it, then he becomes truly broken hearted. These truths taught of God bring every high thought into subjection to Christ Jesus. The foul

foul bows before him; lies low at his feet; proftrates itself before the throne of his grace, and defires to be kept willing to take all its bleffings out of his hands, and to use them to his glory. This is gospel humility, the true abasement of spirit, with which a man, fenfible that he is faved by mere mercy, loaths himself. And while the experience of indwelling fin humbles him down to the dust, it produces through God's grace the happiest effects: for it keeps him in his strong tower and fanctuary, in which alone heas from evil bas, basd distance

of his need of the blood of sprinkling—ever shewing him his want of a perfect righteousness—and ever preaching to him the necessity of his being kept by the power of God. And while he hearkens to these these lessons, trusting to Jesus, he will stand fast and be established. The arm of the Lord God almighty will hold him up, and he shall be safe. While he lives thus out of himself, the sense of indwelling sin will lead him to his true

HAPPINESS, which is all in the fulness of the God man. He will enjoy the more of this, the less he finds in himself. When he cannot draw comfort from any thing of his own, he will seek it more in God. When all the streams are dried up, he will get nearer to the fountain head, and live more upon it. This is the portion of the Lord's people, and the inheritance of all his saints. And in this view indwelling sin is made the means of promoting their

HOLINESS. They see their continual need of Christ. They can

do nothing without him; But believing their oneness with him, they defire to improve it in experience. Every thing they do keeps them fensible of their fins and wants, and shews them the neceffity of living by the faith of the Son of God. This is true humility. The more they are humbled, the more they receive out of the fulness of Jesus: For he giveth more grace-more, to produce nearer fellowship with him in his death, whereby fin will be more dead, and in his refurrection, whereby the foul will be more alive to God. So that the humblest believer is the nearest to God, and is the safest, happiest, and holiest of all the men upon earth: Because he has most fellowship with God. He dwells in God, and God in him. Meditate, O my foul, upon this

this use of the cross. Is fin in thee? Dost thou feel it, and art thou fighting against it? And does not this humble thee? Art thou freely forgiven all trespasses, indwelling fin among the rest? Dost thou know that thou art a faved finner-a brand plucked out of hell? And does not this humble thee? I see reason enough to be humbled, but I feel pride in me lusting against humility. O my precious Jesus, humble me under thy mighty hand. To thee I look for all my falvation. Lord, fave me from pride. Thou hast made me willing to be taught of thee to be meek and lowly, and I come to thee praying, that the disciple may be as his master. O let me drink deep into thy Spirit. In every days warfare against my corruptions, enable me to renounce myself, that I

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may find thou art carrying both me and my cross. Keep me humbled at thy feet, that thou mayest exalt me in due time. I pray to thee, my precious Saviour, for this grace, to mine eternal humbling, and to thine eternal exaltation. In life and death, and for evermore I hope to glory only in the Lord, and to triumph in the God of my salvation.

Thus the believer learns to walk humbly under the inward cross. He is brought to trust all in the Saviour's hand. Daily he discovers more of the ruins of the fall, which lead him to fresh discoveries of the perfect salvation in Jesus. If he attend to what is passing in his own breast, he finds his need of a Saviour every moment and for every thing, by which means he grows in grace and in the excellency of the

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the knowlege of Christ Jesus his Lord. He learns to put no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice only in his completeness in Jefus, from whom all his comforts and victories are received. Thus while felf is laid low, the Saviour is exalted, and his perfect work is more depended on. The believer by hope and love attains more delightful communion with his God. Indwelling fin is his cross, but he bears it, looking unto Jesus: from whom he receives strength to go on, yea to run the race set before him. faith he fees in Jesus the corruption of his nature condemned and dead in law: he beholds himself freed from this, as well as from his other fins. Guilt is the most galling part of this cross; but when guilt is thus removed from the conscience, then the crofs grows light. When taken

up in faith and carried in love to the almighty Saviour, then it does not stop the believer in his fellowship with Jesus, or in his happy walk with him. Glory be to thee, my Lord, of this I have some experience. Yes, precious Jesus, I know the infinite value of that facrifice, which put away fin. I bless thee for that offering, which perfects for ever. Interested in it, I would not distrust my completeness in thee. Through thy holy nature, I expect to be renewed after thy likeness. The fountain for cleanfing from the filth of fin stands open: in it I daily wash my spotted soul. In thy divine righteousness I see the law and justice of the Father infinitely honored by justifying me, and dealing with me, as perfectly righteous. Complete in thee I am. In thy work finished upon earth I am per-VOL. II. M fect, fect, and am represented as such by thee in heaven. I believe thou appearest there as my divine interceffor, bearing my name upon thy shoulders and upon thy breast with a glory beyond all the precious stones in the world. O my blessed Jefus, increase this faith. Lead me from faith to faith; that while I am travelling heavenwards mine eye and my heart may be more fimply fixed upon thee. Come thou glorifier of the Saviour, and discover to me more of the finfulness of fin, and of my need of his falvation. Holy Spirit teach me in the deepest sense of indwelling fin to trust wholly to the offering of the body of Jesus. O lead me to his cross, there to fee all my fins nailed, crucified with him, dead in his death, buried in his grave: in this faith strengthen me mightily to resist and

and to conquer my corruptions. Enable me to experience the power of his cross, that I may feel fin weakened in the love and in the practice of it. Almighty Spirit, in my daily warfare I find no strength less than thine can make me conqueror: and therein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the antient days in the generations of old: Art thou not it that cut the pride of nature to pieces, and wounded the old dragon? O my God, magnify thine arm in subduing every fin. Thou feest my naked heart, and its fighings are not hid from thee. My corruptions are indeed my cross: and they would have been a fore burden too heavy for me to bear, if the curse had not been taken out of them. But fill pardoned as they M 2

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are, yet in this tabernacle I do groan being burdened. I believe the day is coming, when I shall have perfect and eternal freedom from fin and forrow. The first fruits of this only make me long the more for the bleffed harvest. But I desire to wait in hope, bearing my cross, till thy will be done. O Lord, make me willing to refift, give me power to overcome indwelling fin, till the day of redemption, and mortality be swallowed up of life. Hear me, my good God, and answer me for thy names fake, to the glory of Father, Son and Spirit, the three in one Jehovah to whom my heart now bows in worship, and my soul hopes soon to join the fong of never ceasing praise. Amen, and Amen.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XI.

The believer fights the good fight of faith and goes forth conquering and to conquer.

X7HEN the believer has been disciplined under the cross, and has learned to bear it with patience, the captain of his salvation has other exercises for him. He has chosen him to be a soldier, and he intends to teach him to endure hardness. His life in Christ is one continued battle, not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers of earth and hell: He cannot discover their stratagems, nor overcome their affaults, but by being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His M 3 warfare

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warfare is therefore to be carried on entirely by faith. The principles before laid down must be brought into use. What the Spirit of God had discovered to him of his falvation in Jesus is to be tried in every battle, and if it be maintained, it will be improved. If he hold fast the confidence of his faith, he will behave like a good foldier. If he always take up arms in an absolute dependence on his divine General to give him courage, to order him how to attack his enemies, to beflow strength upon him daily to refift them, then victory will be certain: Yea he will be invincible, while he stands strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. He will meditate upon the principles, which he had been taught of God, and will find peace in his own conscience and joy in his heart by bringing

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bringing them intodaily experience. His believing views of the warfare to which he is called will be such as these—

I am through fovereign grace called to fight under the banner of Jesus-He has not left me to fight as uncertainly, but he has conquered all mine enemies for me, and he has undertaken to conquer them all in me. Its true, I am weak, but my redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name. He has saved me from my fins, from the shame and pain of them, from the wicked one, and the wicked world, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God. He has given me a divine righteousness for my justification, and in it I am accepted before the throne: He has put it upon me for ornament and defence -it is a garment of falvation-M 4 which

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which cannot be loft upon earth, and which will shine with never fading beauty in heaven. The Father is perfectly reconciled, and loves me with a love that passes knowlege. I believe it. God is on my fide: I need not fear what any enemy can do unto me. He has taken me into his protection. By his alwife counsel I am guided; by his almighty arm I am defended. My battles are the Lords. Indeed mine enemies are many, and they are too cunning and too mighty for me. But why do they now fight against me? Is it not, because God is my friend? They hate me, because he loves me. While I lived in friendship with them, and was at war with God, they were always trying to make me happy. But ever fince I fled to Jesus for refuge, and fought redemption in his blood, they

they have taken up arms against me: And they have raged more furiously, fince I was enabled to believe in him. But I have no reafon to fear their opposition. With them is an arm of flesh, but with me is the Lord my God to help me, and to fight my battles. I may therefore go to my daily warfare in faith, regarding the commands, waiting for the fulfilling of the promifes of my God, and relying upon the provision, which he has made for my present and for mine eternal victory.

Are thy meditations, O my foul, like these upon the Christian warfare? Examine thyself. If thou art at peace with God, thou must expect war. It is unavoidable. If it be in thy heart to please him who hath chosen thee to be a soldier, then all the powers of wickedness will

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will be in arms. Night and day with never ceafing rage they will pursue thee. Deep laid plans will be formed, and fierce affaults will be made against thy true happiness. They will be attempting, fo long as thou art in the world, by fome cunning or force to draw thee from thy God. Thy life from henceforth is to be one continued battle. Thy victory depends every moment upon holding fast thy confidence in God: And therefore thou must bring the principles of the doctrine of Christ into exercise. Thou hast feen how necessary they are for every step of thy walk, and thou wilt find them equally necessary for every part of thy warfare. This is a leading truth-Thine enemies are God's enemies. Once thou didft join with them, and wast on their fide fighting against God, but he has faved

faved thee from the guilt of thy rebellion. In free love he chose thee in his Son, and in fovereign mercy gave him for thee. The Son rejoiced to do his Father's will for thy falvation: He did it in his life: He suffered it in his death. The ever glorious work is finished. And it has been given thee on the behalf of Christ to believe. The Lord the Spirit has fatisfied thy conscience, and has comforted thy heart with the knowlege of this perfect falvation. The Father is thy Father in Jesus—thine by his own free gift thine by his own unchangeable purpose—and now thine by thy free choice. He has made thee willing in the day of his power to take him for thy God. He is perfectly reconciled unto thee in his Son: And should not this perfectly reconcile thee to him? His love to thee is wonderful

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wonderful in all its properties, in its rife and origin, and in its free and full communication of every covenant bleffing: And does not the belief of this engage thy heart in love to God? Dost thou not love him for his love to thee, and is it not thy daily prayer, that thy love may abound yet more and more? Has not the sense of this peace and love been improved in thy daily walk with him? Hast thou not found the truth, and enjoyed the comfort of these graces in thine experience? O fear not then, fince God is on thy fidefear not, O my foul, to go to war with any enemy, who would rob thee of the peace of God in thy conscience, or of the love of God in thy heart. This is the defign of all those who fight against thee. They want to shake thy confidence

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in God, and so to draw thee from They know, thy cannot fucceed, while thou standest strong in the Lord, trusting to his being thy reconciled God, and loving Father. O keep this trust in him, as the apple of thine eye-bind it continually to thy heart in love-and fight for it as for thy precious life. Be affured, no enemies can prevail against thee, until they have first overcome thy faith: because while thou makest God thy refuge and strength, his almighty arm will be thy defence. Be not afraid, fays he, I am with thee, and I will keep thee by my power through faith unto falvation.

In this warfare it is the chief business of the believer to have respect to the orders given him. He is entirely to depend on the captain of his salvation. What has he said,

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O my foul, to encourage thee to go to battle without fear? Mind his description—it is THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH, in which thou art engaged. By faith thou art to attack thy foes: by faith alone thou canst conquer them: and faith must have his

COMMANDS, or else it can have no lawful warrant to fight, and no just ground to expect victory. Indeed if he had spoken nothing, there could have been no faith: for his word comes first-it is spoken -it is heard-and then faith comes by hearing. Look well then to his word. Study it carefully. If thou obey it aright, thou art absolutely fafe in the hottest battle, and thy victory is as certain, as if the crown was already upon thy head. Thefe are his standing orders-" Fear " thou not, for I am with thee: be " not afraid, for I am thy God: I " will

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" will strengthen thee, yea I will " help thee, yea I will uphold thee " with the right hand of my righ-"teousness. Behold all they that "were incensed against thee shall "be ashamed and confounded: " they shall be as nothing, and they " that strive with thee shall perish. "Thou shalt seek them, and shalt " not find them, even them that " contended with thee: they that " war against thee shall be as no-" thing, and as a thing of nought: " for the Lord thy God will hold " thy right hand, faying unto thee " -fear not, I will help thee. Fear " not thou worm Jacob, and ye " men of Ifrael: I will help thee, " faith the Lord, and thy redeemer "the holy one of Ifrael." Are these indeed the words of God? Does he command poor worms, weak and defenceless, to go to war without

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without fear? Does he encourage them to look up to his arm, promifing to be on their side? Yes, the Lord of hosts fights for them. All their enemies are his, and therefore they may fafely trust, and not be afraid. O my foul, read carefully, read again and again, mark and inwardly digest every word of this divine command; and in obedience to it expect his help. Face thine enemies, whoever they be, with holy boldness: For God is with thee. He has undertaken to fight thy battles. Look at this scripture. Canst thou meditate on it, and yet be afraid? Of whom, or of what? O vile unbelieving fear! Beg of God to fave thee from it. Honor the captain of thy falvation. Trust him. Doubt not but thou art as fafe, obeying his orders, and expecting his help, as almighty power can

can make thee. Observe the courage of one of thy fellow foldiers. Observe his victory—" When I cry "into thee, then shall mine ene-" mies turn back: this I know for "God is for me. In God will I " praise his word; in the Lord will " I praise his word: in God have " I put my truft, I will not be a-" fraid what man can do unto me." The enemies of David came to ' fwallow him up, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He attended to his orders. He confidered the word which was spoken to him. He depended upon it, and had reason to praise God for his faithfulness: for God fulfilled it unto him. There was in it a

PROMISE, as well as a command—do this—and I will be with thee.

The promise is always made good to them who keep the command in faith.

faith. The one is our divine warrant to fight, the other is our encouragement to fight in certain hopes of victory. Attend, O my foul, to the promise, and fear not the accomplishment of it-" In " righteousness shalt thou be esta-" blished: thou shalt be far from " oppression, for thou shalt not fear, " and from terror, for it shall not " come near thee. Behold, they " shall furely gather together, but " not by me: whosoever shall ga-" ther together against thee, shall " fall for thy fake. Behold, I have " created the smith that bloweth " the coals in the fire, and that " bringeth forth an instrument for " his work, and I have created the " waster to destroy. No weapon " that is formed against thee shall " prosper, and every tongue that " shall rise in judgment against thee thou "thou shalt condemn. This is " the heritage of the servants of " the Lord, and their righteousness " is of me, faith the Lord." Thou art here forewarned of thine enemies: they shall gather against thee. But the Lord is not with them. He is thy defender and mighty deliverer, and he will bring all oppofition to nought for thy fake. However numerous their hosts may be, yet they shall fall. Whatever weapons of war they may form, yet none of them shall prosper. This is the certain heritage of all believers. Their righteousness and their strength is of me, faith the Lord-I will fight their battles, and I will never leave them nor forfake them: I will make them daily conquerors, and behold the days come, faith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promifed

mised them, I will make them more

than conquerors.

Is this, O my foul, the infallible word of promise? Has the Lord of hofts undertaken to stand by his people? Has he engaged to lead them out to war by his wisdom, to defend them in battle by his power, and to give them eternal victory to the praise of his own grace? O what motives are these to strengthen thy heart and thy hands. What hast thou reason to fear, fince the Almighty is on thy fide? The battle is his. If hofts of enemies oppose, yet following his orders, and trusting to his strength, thy victory is infallibly fure: For then thou will fight against them, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and thou wilt be invincible

IN THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD.

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God. This armor is the provifion, which God has made for the safety of his soldiers. He puts it on them, and he keeps it on them. It is a whole armor, a complete defence from head to foot. great mercy their God, who provided it, has revealed to them the use of every part. In the fixth of the Ephesians the apostle has described it at large. He supposes them to be acquainted with the christian doctrines, and to have walked in the comfort of them, and he calls upon them to bring them into practice in their daily warfare. "It only remains my "brethren, fays he, that ye "be strong in the Lord," for no strength less than his can keep you, " and in the might of what "he is able to do"-by faith relying upon his promise, and trusting ing to his power, " putting on the "whole armor of God," that being strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, ye may be preserved dependent upon the Lord, and enabled to engage in his strength, and to conquer to his glory. Unless you thus rely upon his word and arm, you will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil: for we wreftle not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places: therefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be enabled to withstand in the evil day against the combined legions of earth and hell, and after ye have done all, to stand conquerors in the field of battle, when your enemies

are driven out of it. Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth—this is the first grace in use—

SAVING KNOWLEGE; which the holy Spirit teaches. He guides believers into all truth necessary for their falvation. As the military girdle went round the loins, and bound all the armor together, fo the knowlege of the truth, as it is in Jesus, binds together all the graces. It is of the essence of every one of them-it is light in the understanding to discover what they are, that they may be received into the heart in love, and that in obeying the truth their influence may operate upon the life and conversation. When a man is thus taught of God, then he fees his need of the breast-plate of righteoufness, and he puts it on, namely the IMPUTED

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of the God-man. The breast-plate was armor for the vital parts—so is the righteousness of Christ—it is a perfect protection from every stroke of every enemy. He that wears it upon his heart, believing in the life and death of Immanuel; has armor proof against all weapons. If the strength of his adversaries could be collected into one arm, which was to strike one mighty blow, his breast-plate would ward it off. The armor of God could not be hurt. The foldier with it on cannot perish, but shall have everlasting life. Therefore covered with this invincible breaftplate he may face the stoutest foes, and attack them without fear. He may march on undaunted, "hav-" ing his feet shod with the prepa-" ration of the gospel of peace."

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PEACE

PEACE WITH GOD through Jefus Christ is another grace of the Spirit, which mightily strengthens the inner man. Whoever fees the truth of the gospel, and believes it, will discover God to be at peace with him, perfectly reconciled to him in Jesus, and who out of his fatherly love will overrule all things for his good. In the fense of this. he may go on with holy boldness, as the foldier did with his greaves When his feet and legs were armed with them he was not afraid of thorns or briers, of rough roads or sharp spikes. In like manner the peace, which the gospel brings, carries the Christian foldier fearless through difficulties. He will march on conquering, if he keep on his greaves. If he maintain peace with God through Jesus Christ, he will not be stopt by war, VOL. II.

or trouble, or temptation. But he must remember, that to every piece of armor faith is effentially necessarythe girdle is good for nothing without the belief of the truth—the breaftplate is no defence without faith in the righteousness of God our Saviour—the greaves are no more than if the feet were covered with a bit of thin gawze, unless faith be mixed with the gospel: "Therefore To " ALL THESE take the shield of " faith, wherewith ye shall be able " to quench all the fiery darts of "the wicked one." What excellent things are here spoken of

FAITH, as a grace of the holy Spirit! When they used to fight with bows and arrows, the soldier could hold up his shield and keep himself safe: so the christian soldier, if the fiery darts of satan fly thick about him, by faith will quench them all.

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He has much combustible within him, and one spark would set him in a stame, if he had not his shield: but armed with it and opposing it to the arrows of the wicked one, he may lift up his head with joy: "For he has the helmet of salva-"tion" upon it. The grace here meant is

HOPE, and it is fitly compared to an helmet, which was armor for the head, and a defence for all the fenses which are feated in the head. It is called the helmet of SALVATION. because it ALWAYS SAVES. It never can be destroyed. None of the fenses of the spiritual man can perish in this warfare: and therefore it is a hope that maketh not ashamed. Hope with its helmet on fears no blows. It can truly fay, I am commanded to be strong and of good courage, not to be a-N 2 fraid fraid or dismayed: for the Lord my God is with me, whithersoever I go. Trusting to this command, hope is in wars and fightings full of glory and immortality. The Lord's orders to march forward are the ground of hope: and this supplies him with a weapon, which none of his enemies can withstand even the sword of the Spirit, "which is the

Word of God." The scripture is called a sword—(an offensive weapon—and it is the only one, which the christian soldier has—all the rest being for his desence) because it is mighty through the Spirit working by it to cut off all opposers. Our Lord in combat with the old serpent deseated him with this sword. And the noble army of his followers, now crowned in glory, overcame him by the

blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony—they held fast their confidence in the word, and with it, as with a two edged fword they flew the old dragon, and gained eternal victory over him. Fight against him, O my foul, with the fame weapon. Keep the fword in thy hand. Thou wilt stand in need of it every moment against that subtle foe. The word is the means of overcoming the devil, and it is mighty through God, when heard and read in faith, and inwardly digested by prayer. The best soldier in the Lord's army is best acquainted with the necessity of prayer: he not only believes what God fays of his armor, but he also depends upon him for the daily experience of it; and therefore when he has put his armor on, in the

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PRAYER

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PRAYER OF FAITH he calls upon the captain of his falvation for orders, courage, strength, victory, and every thing needful-" Pray-"ing always with all prayer and " fupplication in the Spirit, and " watching thereunto with all per-"feverance." O my God, teach me thus to pray. I would depend on thee, and express my dependence without ceasing: for I am fensible that without thee I can do nothing: Although thou hast chosen me to be a foldier, yet I have neither counsel nor strength for war. My foolish heart loves ease: it would have the crown, but it would be excused striving lawfully for it. find nothing in myself that disposes me to endure the hardship of the christian warfare. My whole trust therefore is in thee Jesus, my Lord, and my God. Thou has called

me to the battle: thou must fit me, for it, keep me in it, and make me conqueror. All is of thee. The whole armor of God, which I have received, the faving knowlege, the righteousness and the peace, that precious faith and glorious hope, that fure word, wherein thou haft. caused me to put my trust-these are the gifts of thy grace: and on thee, my Jesus, I entirely depend for the right use of them. Thou must still cover my head in the day of battle. Mine eyes are lifted up to thee, my hopes centre in thee, from whom cometh all my falvation. O Lord of hofts, keep me in this fimple dependence upon thy word and arm, that I may exercise thy graces in fighting thy battles: and if thou art pleased to give me daily victory, I may be willing to return thee all thy glory. O faith-N 4 ful

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ful promise-keeping God, stand by me, and enable me to hold out, till I finish my course with joy, and my warfare being ended, I may bless thee for evermore for that peace, which passeth all understanding. O grant me this for thy mercies sake. Amen.

If this be thy dependence, if thou art standing in the Lord's strength, and trusting entirely to his armor, then confider, O my foul, thy fafety in every battle. If thou go to war, calling upon thy God to be with thee, and to give thee victory, then victory is certain. Thou canst not be conquered, if thou fight in faith, relying upon the orders of thy General, expecting his promised help, and waiting for it in prayer, trusting to the armor, which he has put upon thee. Is this then thy defence? Dost thou pray alwaysbegin

begin the good fight—carry it on and end it, with the prayer of faith? Bleffed be his holy name, fince this is in some measure thy case: go on in his strength, and fear not to fight his battles, who hath chosen thee to be a soldier. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart. The more bold thou art in thy faith, the stronger shalt thou be in thy warfare: for whatever thou. hast courage to do at his command, thou shalt perform in his strength. And why should a doubt arise? Hast thou forgotten, that the great decifive battle has been fought and won. Immanuel stood up, the great champion for his people. The almighty warrior entered the lifts with their enemies, and he conquered all their hosts. He triumphed over fatan and the world, over fin and death; and he led captivity N 5 captive.

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captive. Remember, he calls upon thee to share in his victory, by faith to partake with him of the spoils, and to keep the vanquished enemies daily under thy feet. He has made them his footstool, and he will make them thine. This is thy warfare. And what haft thou to fear in it? What hurt can a dead man do thee? If he has a gun charged in his hand, he cannot fire it. He is not able to stir a finger. No more able is any adverfary to destroy thee. Whilst thou art trusting to the complete victory of Jesus, thou wilt daily share with him in it. And the more simple thy trust is in him, the greater conquest will he give thee, because he will then receive from thee greater glory. How should this consideration infpire thee with courage—it is for his glory that thou shouldst conquer.

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quer. Thy God commands thee to fight on his fide, promifes to affift thee, has provided invincible armor, and has in his own person engaged and defeated every enemy, against whom thou art to fight; and therefore he requires thee in obedience to his orders, depending on his promises and armor, to bring him glory by conquering in his strength. O my foul, hast thou not a zeal to promote the honor of thy Saviour? Is not his fame and renown very near thy heart? Doft thou not think it a privilege to be any way instrumental in exalting his great name? Yes, Lord, thou hast made me willing to glorify thee. Thou art my lawful king, and I defire to honor thee by following thine orders, fighting thy battles, and relying entirely upon thy promises. I would not question

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tion thy faithfulness to them, nor fear any enemy against whom thou hast commanded me to fight. I would not doubt of thy strength to carry me through the battle, or to give me the promised victory. In this faith I conduct my warfare, and I would have all my fuccess to bring fresh glory to thee. I know that the courage, which I have in the field of battle, is not from nature, but from grace. It arises from the belief that I am armed with the whole armor of God, and that the enemies against whom I fight are his, as well as mine—his—whom he conquered for me-and is now conquering in me-and all to his own praise. From hence, Lord, arises my sure and certain hope of victory. I ground it on thy word. I fight in faith. I trust to thy complete victory, and now am sharing

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in it. My daily victories are only the fruit and effect of thine. O my almighty Jesus, give me grace to ascribe all the glory to thee. It is thy due. Make me willing to give it thee for the victories obtained for me, and in me. O keep me by thine almighty power through faith, till I have fought the good fight and won the prize. Grant me this, blessed king of saints, to thine eternal honor and glory. Amen.

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CHAP. XII.

The believer marches on fighting the good fight of faith, and daily gains victory over the world.

THE world fignifies the visible frame of nature; not the earth only, but also the present constitution of the universe, of animate and inanimate beings: All which were created good at first, but through the sin of man, and the just sentence of God, are now subject to vanity.

The world is become a great enemy to fallen man: Because it is always presenting something to his senses, which is a temptation to sin. It keeps him from God by its flatteries, promising to make

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him happy in its enjoyments. It fets them before him. He looks, and loves. He gives his heart a willing facrifice to the world, and fuffers himself to be intirely influ-

enced by its hopes and fears.

While man was innocent, every object raised in him some spiritual idea, and thereby led him to contemplate and adore the great Creator in his works: But upon the fall he lost this use of natural objects: They did not, as they struck upon the fenses, excite correspondent ideas in the mind: Because the man was alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in him. His understanding was in darkness: He could not see the things of the spirit of God; neither indeed could he know them for want of spiritual discernment. Being thus deprived of the image and

and likeness of God in knowlege, having no will but the will of the flesh, and his heart being at enmity with God, he sinks into communion with the creature. His very mind is carnal. His affections are earthly. His pursuits are after temporal things. His enjoyments are in the delights of sense. In this state he lives a mere animal life without God in the world.

Indeed he has within him an immortal foul; but it is apostate. It is fallen from God, and has no more communion with him by nature, than the devil has. The law has condemned it to death—The soul that sinneth it shall die—and it is already spiritually dead to God, being as incapable of quickening itself as a dead corps is. Therefore it cannot attain of itself

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any true knowlege of God, or have any real fellowship with the things of God. While fallen man is in this state, his earthly and fenfual appetites take the lead; and all the light in his mind, and the defires of his heart only dispose him to feek for their present gratification. Outward objects offer themselves to him; they make an impression upon his senses, and fometimes act upon them very forcibly, folliciting and enticing to the enjoyment of some fancied good, and so long as he continues an unregenerate man, these temptations prevail, and keep him from God. He does not fee God in outward objects. He does not love God for them. He does not enjoy them to the glory of God. God is not in all his thoughts.

Man has been called a micro-cosm.

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cosm. He is so wonderfully made, that the whole creation comes under the observation of some of his fenses. His eye, by means of light, can discover the form and furface of all objects. The ear takes in all founds. The nofe perceives all vapours and smells. The palate tastes all forts of fluids. All forts of folids come under the fense of feeling, which is in every part of the body, for the benefit and preservation of the whole. Thus every object in the universe is fitted to act upon some of the fenses, and was intended by the Creator, to excite some spiritual idea. But this use was lost by the fall. The impression made by outward objects does not raife up the mind to God, and excite adoration and praise, but keeps the heart from him, and affords a continual

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continual temptation to live to the world, and to the things of it. Whatever is presented to the eye, to the ear, &c. can stir up and bring forth evil. And actually does, according to the fcripture: For "the whole world (as fallen " from God) lieth in wickedness," and is at enmity with him; and therefore believers are commanded Love ye not the world, nei-" ther the things that are in the " world; if any man love the " world, the love of the father is " not in him: For all that is in " the world, the luft of the flesh, " and the lust of the eyes, and the " pride of life, is not of the father, "but is of the world." Mind, ALL that is in the world is the means of feeding some lust: For which reason the apostle calls it-"this present evil world"-evil, because

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because of sin, and because of its temptations to keep the heart in love with it, and to shut out the love of the Father.

How awfully folemn are these scriptures! What strict examination, O my foul, should they put thee upon! Search, and try thyfelf by them; and fee, whether thou art faved from the love of the world. It is a bleffed part of redemption, and it is one of the brightest jewels in the redeemer's crown. How infinitely glorious is this character-" Jesus Christ gave himself for our fins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world." This deliverance is worthy of God. We had finned by loving this present evil world, and he came to fave us from our fins: It ruled over our hearts and lives, and kept us under its tyranny, and he becaute came

came to deliver us from the love and from the power of it. Thrice happy are they, for whom he thus gave himself. O my soul, read and study the everlasting honors of this great victory, and fee, whether thou art indeed a partaker of them. Jehovah was madeflesh for his people, and as their divine furety came to conquer their enemies, the world among the rest. He was in their nature to enter into open war with it, and to overcome every temptation, by which it had drawn Adam or any of his descendents from God. Thus he was to conquer the world for them, and then by his Spirit he was to conquer it in them. He begun the battle with his first breath, and every moment of his life he was victorious. The world has its fnares for every age and state, but he fell into none of them. His

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His hands were clean. His heart was pure. He never lift up his foul to vanity. He was in his infancy the boly child Jesus: And he grew in wisdom and stature. When he was twelve years old he was wifer than his teachers: For he fat in the midst of the doctors both hearing them, and asking them queftions: And all that heard him were assonished at his understanding and answers. His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his law did he meditate day and night —He faw things as they are there described in their true nature. The world could not impose upon him. He lived above its offers of good. And he feared not the worst of its threatened evils. When he begun his ministry he fought a pitcht battle; and became an eternal conqueror: The prince of this

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this world was permitted to try every object by which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, had feduced mankind. They were presented to Christ in their richest dress. The beauty, the pleasure, the honor, and riches of the world were fet before him in all their glory. But they made no impression. They did not darken his understanding, nor influence his heart, nor provoke any fenfual appetite. He rejected every pleasing offer: He withstood every flattering allurement. Thus he conquered the world; but not for himself. His victory over all its temptations was for his people. He accounted their enemies his. He fought their battles. He conquered, as a king for his fubjects. And he gives them to share with him in his

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his triumph, when they believe in him: for thus he encourages them -" These things have I spoken " unto you, that in me ye might " have peace, in the world ye shall " have tribulation; but be of good " courage, I HAVE OVERCOME THE " WORLD." The world is your enemy. It had you in bondage, and you could not free yourselves: therefore I came in your nature, God manifest in the flesh, to conquer it for you; and I have obtained a perfect conquest. When I have proclaimed it to your consciences, and pardoned your idolatrous attachment to the worldwhen in me ye have found peace, yet still the world will be your enemy. Because I have chosen you out of it, therefore it will hate you. My peace will occasion and increase your tribulation in it. But fear

fear not. Remember it is a vanquished foe. Attack it in my strength, as partakers of my victory. Fight against it, and treat it, as under my feet and made my footstool. Whenever it tempts you, depend absolutely upon my conquest, and you will find my grace almighty to crucify the world to you, and you to it.

How animating are these words! with what courage should they infpire the Christian soldier! although the world be his enemy, yet it cannot conquer him, and rob him of his crown. The main battle has been fought, the victory is gained, and the conqueror is already crowned in the name and person of all the redeemed. faith he gives them their share in his victory, asit is written—"What-" foever is born of God overcom-" eth the world, and this is the vic-VOL. II. " tory

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" tory that overcometh the world, "even our faith." Every person who is born again by the Spirit has a new nature spiritual and heavenly, and has new fenfes to exercise about spiritual things. His renewed faculties are formed for heavenly things, as his bodily fenfes are for material. By faith he fees a better world than this, and furveys its beauties and glories. He has ears to hear the joyful found of gospel grace, and to receive it. When that name, which is dear and precious above every name, is preached, it is to him as ointment poured forth: the fweet fmelling favor refreshes his heart and exhilerates his spirits. Then he tasts that the Lord is gracious-foretasts his heavenly love, and as truly lays hold of and enjoys its spiritual blessings, as he ever did of any thing material. He is created

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created anew in Christ Jesus, not only that he may know these things, but may also partake of them-as truly now by faith, as he ever will by fense: And the more he knows and the more he partakes of them, the more will he be delivered from this present evil world: "For this " is the victory that overcometh the "world, even our faith." By faith we see the victory of Christ, and rest upon it, and the more fafely we put our trust and confidence in it, the more fellowship we shall have with him in its fruitsmore wisdom to see the vanity of the world, as he faw it-more grace to deliver us from the love of it-and more strength to subdue its temptations. These are some of the happy effects of his conquest, which he left us to enjoy here, as pledges of our being one day what he

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he now is. He is more than conqueror, so shall we be through him that loveth us. As our faith increases we shall share more with him, and triumph more over the smiles and the frowns of the world.

Since this is the only way to conquer the world, art thou, O my foul, conquering it in this way, and hast thou faith in the victory of Jesus? Dost thou depend on him for the pardon of thy former love of the world, and for the crucifying the love of it in thy heart? Art thou relying upon his victorious grace to make thee a daily conqueror over all itstemptations? Examine thy warfare, and see whether it be carried on according to the scripture rule, and with the promised success. Look at some of the Lord's champions. Survey the triumphs of Moses, and remember the

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the Lord's hand is not shortened-"By FAITH Moses when he was " come to years refused to be called " the fon of Pharaoh's daughter, " choosing rather to suffer affliction " with the people of God, than to " enjoy the pleasures of sin for a " feason, esteeming the reproach of "Christ greater riches than the " treasures of Egypt: for he had re-" fpect unto the recompence of the "reward." How great was this " faith! how glorious its victories! It was a divine grace, and exercifed by a divine operation—mighty through God. By it Moses saw the reality of heavenly things: by it he tasted their sweetness, enjoyed their bleffedness, and had a hope full of glory and immortality. The world made him its highest offers, but he rejected them. His eye was kept fingle, his heart chast towards his

his God. The honor of Pharaoh's alliance he despised. He preferred affliction with the people of God to the pleasures of fin. He embraced reproach, when it came on him for following Christ, and he esteemed it beyond all the treasures of Egypt. He faw the vanity and emptiness of earthly enjoyments, and he trampled upon them, having refpect to the recompense of reward. Thus he was crucified to the world. What an exalted character! There is no fuch hero in the records of prophane history, but thank God there are great numbers in facred, who followed the steps of his faith. Every foldier of Christ Jesus is called to war against the world, and every good soldier is a daily conqueror. The world is always present, and has its temptations ready to stop him, but he meets them

them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, trusting to the whole armor of God. Then victory is certain. And in order that the Lord may have all the glory, he will keep him fighting and praying in this manner—

This world is not my portion. My happiness does not confist in loving and enjoying the things of it. It is an evil world-it lieth in wickedness-Satan has his feat and throne in it—and it is condemned to fire. Thank God, mine eyes are open to see a better world than this, and I am travelling to it. I believe it was the purpose and will of the eternal Three to choose me to be an heir of the world to come. Glory be to the Father for his free choice, and for all the bleflings of his love. Glory be to the co-equal Son, for his complete and everlast-0 4 ingly DIN W

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ingly perfect falvation. Glory be to the eternal Spirit, to whom I am indebted, for what I believe of the Son's falvation, and for what I have experienced of the Father's love. On thee, O God the Holy Ghoft, I place my dependence for carrying on the work which thou haft begun. I would be guided by thy counsel every step of my walk, and strengthened by thee for every part of my warfare. Keep me in the right way, and make me conqueror over all the enemies who would stop me in it, or turn me out of it; especially deliver me from this present evil world. While I am going through it to a better, preserve my heart from the love of it. O my God, give me a stranger's temper, and a pilgrim's frame. Let me live as a sojourner here below, that the good things I meet with

with on my journey may not tempt me to make this my rest, and the evil things I meet with may not lead me to fret and murmur, as if God was not my father, and his heaven my home. O thou divine teacher, shew me daily the glory of my Saviour's victory over the world, that I may share with him in it; and enable me to go forth conquering and to conquer in his strength, and to his praise. Help me to look apon the world, and to treat it, as he did, that feeling the emptiness of its offered happiness, I may with a fingle heart cleave to my Father in Jesus, and may be faved from the spirit of the world. Keep me waiting for my appointed time, fitting quite loose and free to the things about me-And let heavenly and eternal things be always present to my faith, in their reality

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reality and bleffedness, that I may grow more alive to them, and more dead to every thing else. Preserve my heart, O my gracious God, that it may be simple with thee, when I am in my worldly bufiness. Enable me to cast all my cares and burdens on thee, believing thou carest for me. O daily crucify the world to me, and me to it, that when its offers stand in competition with thy love, I may have grace to reject them. In this holy war carry me on glorifying him who hath called me to be a foldier. Grant me this for Jesus sake, Amen, and Amen.

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The believer marches on resisting and overcoming the wiles and the assaults of the tempter.

CAtan is a continual adversary. He rebelled against the sovereign will of the most high in heaven, and was cast out. As soon as man was formed, he began to tempt him to rebel against God, and he succeeded. Ever since the revelation was made of the divine purpose to redeem sinners, he has fet himself up against it, and with impotent rage opposed it. He is always trying to hinder finners from coming to the Saviour, and when they are come to him, to hinder them from living by faith upon

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upon his fulness. On the fide of fatan are principalities and powers, combined armies and united legions of apostate spirits-formidable to man for their number-more fo for their fubtlety and cunningthey have stratagems and wiles, depths of skill to deceive - in which they are fo fuccessful that they have deceived the whole world. Their courage is desperate. They fear nothing: for they were mad enough to take up arms against the Almighty. No wonder then that they should be unwearied in their attacks against man. They are always upon the watch-ready as one temptation fails to present another. Their strength is very great -they are called principalities and powers-rulers and princes-yea the god of this world: because they work, as they please, in the children nodil

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children of disobedience; whom they keep so fast bound in the chains of sin, that no human arm can break them asunder. And it is the only joy they know—the joy of hell—to rivet the chains of sin upon those poor captives, till they bind them in everlasting chains of darkness.

These, O my soul, are thine enemies. They had drawn thee into their rebellion, and they are still trying to draw thee into their torments. They have free access to thy fallen nature. They know how to make use of the objects in the world to work upon thy senses, and to stir up evil thoughts. They have fiery darts always at hand to throw at thy faith, and rest not night andday in attacking thy peace and happiness in Jesus.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and

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all that is within me bless his holy name for undertaking to fave thee from those enemies. The love of the Father gave his Son to be the woman's feed-Jehovah incarnate —for his people. In their nature he was to bruife the head of the ferpent: his cunning, his poison, and all his power to hurt, lie in his head: when this is bruised, he is defeated. The battle to be fought was foretold, and the victory to be won was promised, to Adam; and by faith in it, he and all the redeemed in the old testament conquered fatan. In the fulness of time God was manifest in the flesh: he came to destroy the works of the devil. Sin is his great work; by it he drew man from God, and by it he keeps man from God. Immanuel begun the destruction of the works of the devil by taking human

human nature. His manhood was perfectly holy—it had not, it could not have, any fin: because God was in Christ. There was every thing in his holy life, which the law could require. He obeyed all its precepts with uninterrupted conformity, and being co-equal and co-eternal with the Father his obedience was therefore divine, abfolutely complete, and infinitely fufficient to justify for ever. He was tempted indeed, but he overcame every temptation. He defeated fatan in all his attempts, infomuch that when he was entering upon the last scene of his life, he could declare-" The prince of " this world cometh, AND HATH " NOTHING IN ME." He did come, and the great pitched battle was fought, which was to decide for ever, Whether the feed of the woman,

man, or the serpent should be crowned conqueror. The battle began in the garden of Gethsemane, and was finished upon mount Calvary. Every stratagem of infernal policy was then tried: every affault of devilish malice was exerted against the captain of our falvation: but he conquered them all, as it was foretold-"Thou shalt tread upon " the lion and adder; the young " lion and the dragon shalt thou " trample under thy feet." He trod upon the ferpent's head, and crushed it, but at the same time the ferpent bit his heel. The heel is his lowest part, his body—this fell in the conflict, but he completed his victory by the loss of his life. The apostle speaks of the cross, upon which he bled and died, as the great scene of this engagement, and on which he vanquished

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quished and triumphed for ever over the powers of hell-having spoiled principalities and powers, and taken away all their armor wherein they trusted, he made a shew of them openly triumphing over them upon the cross, leading them as you would captives in chains; rebels still, but unable to rob the Lord Christ of the glory of any part of his conquest: Thus through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. O bleffed and almighty Jesus, eternal thanks are due to thee for this most glorious victory. Satan is now a vanquished foe. He is under thy feet, thou high exalted head of the redeemed. Thou hast for them, and in their stead overcome all his wiles and affaults. He may tempt, but he cannot conquer them. He has

no right to accuse them—thou hast made an end of sin. He has no power to torment them—thou hast brought in everlasting righteousness. He cannot pluck them out of thy hands—they are dear to thee, and kept as the apple of thine eye. Glory be to thee, thou wilt soon bring them out of the reach of his temptations, and thou wilt be to them an eternal and infinitely perfect Saviour.

In this faith, O my foul, thou art called upon to take up arms against the old serpent. Thou art to fight against him under the banner of Jesus—a name terrible to the devil and his angels. Trusting to the victory of Jesus for thee, and to the strength of Jesus working in thee, thou art daily to bring him honor and renown. How safe, how blessed is such a warfare!

Thou

Thou hast the wisdom of thy God and Saviour to discover to thee the wiles of Satan. Trust to it, O my foul. Leave thyself simply to his direction; and although Satan be fubtle and cunning-although he has depths of policy, and plans out of number, yet thou shalt not be ignorant of his devices. Thy all-knowing Saviour will detect his plots, and turn the counsel of that Ahitophel into folly. And if he attack thee as a roaring lion, yet fear him not. Thy redeemer is strong. He has bruised the serpent's head; resist him in faith, and thou shalt bruise it also. Lean on the arm of thy Jesus: Depend on his promised strength: Follow his orders, and thou shalt tread Satan under thy feet daily.

But above all remember, that thou canst only conquer him by

faith-

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faith-by faith in the victory of Jesus, built upon thy faith in the word of Jesus: For thus the scripture testifies of the conquerors now round the throne, " that they over-" came the devil by the blood of " the lamb, and by the word of their "testimony"—they overcame him by depending upon the atoning blood, and by trusting to what the word says of its all-sufficiency to fave; and they found by experience the promised victory. To the same effect the apostle Peter stirs up believers to a fobriety in the use of all creature comforts, and to a continual watchfulness against their enemies, in order that they might daily conquer-" Be fober, be vi-" gilant, because your adversary the "devil, as a roaring lion, walketh " about, feeking whom he may " devour: whom refift STEDFAST " IN

"IN THE FAITH." This brings victory. The believer refifts the devil, and stands against him stedfast in the power of Christ. This power is almighty, and therefore faith relying upon it infallibly fecures victory. The devil may throw his fiery darts thick and fast, but the shield of faith is proof against them. It is able through God to quench them; so that the fire of temptation shall not inflame the foul. How precious are these scriptures! How encouraging to the Christian soldier! they promise him every thing needful for the battle, and for victory. Why then shouldst thou doubt, O my foul, of the promised bleffings? Take courage. Fight under the banner of Jesus. Keep close to his colors. Follow strictly his orders: And he will keep Satan under thy feet feet to day, and thou shalt be more than conqueror over him for ever.

- Confidering thy war with Satan in this light, what is there in it, O my foul, to stop thee in thy way to heaven? Thou art called upon to fight against him, but then it is in the Lord's strength, and as a partaker of his conquest. made all thine enemies his. He fought thy battles. His triumph is thine. Thou mayest therefore fing of victory before every battle. Thou dost not fight to gain the pardon of thy fins, or to make thyself righteous; but to oppose thine adversary, who would draw thee into fin, and if he could, would rob thee of thy righteoufness. He hates thee, because Christ loves thee. But his hatred is in vain. Thy Saviour has conquered him for thee, and by faith will

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will conquer him in thee: For thou art kept by his almighty power. Trusting to this, go forth strong in the Lord. While thou art living in communion with him, thy warfare will be successful. If thou attend to his word, and follow his orders, he will encourage thy heart, and strengthen thy hands with such promises as these—

I have chosen thee to be a soldier, and I send thee out to sight against all the enemies of thy peace. But thou dost not go to this warfare at thine own charges, nor carry it on doubtful of victory. I have provided every thing needful for maintaining the battle, and for bringing thee off conqueror. Thou shalt find much profit in this holy war. It will be the means of keeping up constant fellowship with me. Thou wilt see thy need of coming

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feet to day, and thou shalt be more than conqueror over him for ever.

Confidering thy war with Satan in this light, what is there in it, O my foul, to stop thee in thy way to heaven? Thou art called upon to fight against him, but then it is in the Lord's strength, and as a partaker of his conquest. made all thine enemies his. He fought thy battles. His triumph is thine. Thou mayest therefore fing of victory before every battle. Thou dost not fight to gain the pardon of thy fins, or to make thyself righteous; but to oppose thine adversary, who would draw thee into fin, and if he could, would rob thee of thy righteoufness. He hates thee, because Christ loves thee. But his hatred is in vain. Thy Saviour has conquered him for thee, and by faith will

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will conquer him in thee: For thou art kept by his almighty power. Trusting to this, go forth strong in the Lord. While thou art living in communion with him, thy warfare will be successful. If thou attend to his word, and follow his orders, he will encourage thy heart, and strengthen thy hands with such promises as these—

I have chosen thee to be a soldier, and I send thee out to fight against all the enemies of thy peace. But thou dost not go to this warfare at thine own charges, nor carry it on doubtful of victory. I have provided every thing needful for maintaining the battle, and for bringing thee off conqueror. Thou shalt find much profit in this holy war. It will be the means of keeping up constant fellowship with me. Thou wilt see thy need of coming

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coming to me for courage, for orders, for strength; and by faith thou wilt receive fensible experience of my being present with thee, and on thy fide. Only trust me, and thou shalt find me faithful to my promise of help and victory. Go forth then to thy daily warfare, and boldly face fatan. Fear him not in the least: for that would betray a doubt of my having him under my feet, or of my putting him under thine. Give not place to him; no, not for a moment; but refift him, and continue to refift him, stedfast in faith and prayer -trufting to my promise and depending on mine arm. Be fober, be vigilant. Thus oppose the devil, and thou wilt certainly conquer him. And having conquered, fight on. In the fight look to me for victory, having obtained it, expect a fresh

a fresh battle, and look still to me for victory: And thus go on conquering and to conquer. Thy crown is in my keeping. As sure as I have it on my head, it shall be on thine. Thou shalt soon sit down with me on my throne a crowned conqueror for evermore.

Glory be to thee, my precious Jesus, for these faithful promises, in which thou half caused me to put my trust. And now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy fervant be established, and do as thou hast said. Thou hast put it into my heart to defire to be a good foldier, and to fight thy battles against all the enemies of thy crown and dignity. O thou glorious captain of my falvation, arm me for my daily warfare with fatan. He is too cunning for me; O my God, teach me his devices. VOL. II. He He is too mighty for me, but the feed of the woman hath bruifed his head; yes, almighty Jesus, thou hast destroyed the devil and his works. I believe in thy victory. O let me partake of its fruits, and daily bring thee honor and renown by my victories. Make me strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that I may not fear fatan: Send me out against him armed with thine invincible armor. Strengthen me, O.my God, that I faint not through the length or sharpness of the battle, but enable me to persevere, till thou discharge me from the war. Thus in a constant dependence upon thee would I fight the good fight of faith, keeping up communion with thee in every battle, and growing more acquainted with my wants, and more thankful for every fupply. O my loving Jesus, increase

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crease my fellowship with thee. I desire to war a good warfare, and every thing needful for it is from thee. From thy fulness I expect it, and when I receive it, I would use it to thy glory. Hear Lord, and answer me for thy mercies sake. Amen, and Amen.

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C. H. A. P. XIV.

The believer kept by the power of God perseveres in his holy walk, and victorious warfare.

AFTER the believer has made a great progress in his walk, and has been very successful in his warfare, yet he is not out of the reach of any temptation. He is still liable to be stopped in the way of duty. His enemies may cheat him by some stratagem, or gain some advantage over him by open force. While he is attending to these things, as they come before him in his daily experience, a thought will often arise—

I am afraid my profession will at last come to nothing, and I shall

be

be a castaway. I feel so much corruption working in my duties, and my heart is fo ready to revolt and to turn from the Lord in every battle, that I cannot help being uneafy about my final state. How can I, it is not in me to, hold out and persevere against so much opposition from within and without? What fignifies my refolution to walk forward, or to fight for an uncertain crown? I think I gain no ground. Mine own carnal will plagues me, and I love ease and quiet, as much as ever. My corruptions feem as many, and mine enemies as strong as they were: One day, I fear, I shall perish by their hands. My heart faints at the thought. My courage fails me. O wretched man that I am, Where, to whom shall I look for strength toenable me to hold out unto the end?

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No believer is absolutely free from fuch an attack; and there are feafons very favorable to it. If his mind be in heaviness through manifold temptations, and be reafoning legally upon them. If he be under the hidings of the Lord's countenance, or in a time of defertion. If he be fallen into any great fin, perhaps his old besetting fin; if the guilt of it be upon his conscience, and the indignation of God be heavy upon him: Then fuch thoughts find eafy admittance; and if they be indulged, they greatly diffress the believer: for they directly affault his faith, and strike at the very being of his hope. As these graces are weakened, he moves flowly; and if unbelief prevail, there is a stop put to his progress in the heavenly road.

Bleffed be the Lord God of Ifrael, who

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who has made ample provision for victory over this temptation. The principles before infifted on are now to be brought into practice. Here is a fresh occasion to try their power and influence, and to make it appear, that in these distressing circumstances the Father has given his children good ground to rely upon his unchangeable love. He has revealed to them the immutability of his counsel and of his oath, that when they have fled to Jesus for refuge, they may comfort their hearts and fay-I have been afraid of falling away, but it is without reason: for I have still immutable things to trust in-although to my fense and feeling every thing feems to make against me, yet God has promised not to leave me nor forfake me. O that I may honor his promise, and with-P 4 out

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out doubting rely upon his faithful

arm to make it good.

Confider then, O my foul, the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Review them carefully. Thou feeft what influence they have upon every step of thy walk, and how mighty they are through God to carry thee through all thy difficulties. Offudy then the perfect freeness and the absolute sufficiency of the falvation of Jesus. Read and mark the bonds and fecurities, which a faithful God has given thee to truft in, and not to be afraid. time to honor them most is to believe them with the least sensible evidence: for that is the strongest faith. If thou canst believe upon his bare word, and it is a very good warrant, thy feet shall stand firm upon the rock, and thy goings shall be well ordered; and that thou

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thou mayest believe this in the hardest trials God informs thee, that thy continuance in grace does not depend on thyfelf, "Thou standest by faith": and faith should direct thee to what God has undertaken and has promised to do forthee. He would have thee to place the confidence of thy heart upon his tried word, which is a never failing foundation, and if thou wast to build all thy hopes of persevering uponit, it would still thy fears and comfort thy heart. Thou wouldst then fee that God has not left thee to thy felf to stand or fall, but has engaged never to leave thee nor forfake thee. He has declared, he will not turn away from thee to do thee good, and he will put his fear into thy heart, and thou shall not turn away from him. View thy case in this comfortable light, and while thou art confidering the fafety of thy perfevering,

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fevering, as revealed in scripture for the ground of thy faith, may every promise lead thee to trust more in God, and to trust less to thyself, and then the snare which was laid for thee will be broken, and thou wilt be delivered.

But take heed of carrying thine opinions to scripture, and of forcing it to speak for them. Beware of that common mistake: and beware of human systems. Pay no regard to men or names. Simply attend to the promises of God concerning thy persevering. Thy present trial has convinced thee, that thou canst not depend on thine own faithfulness: this therefore is the time to learn practically the faithfulness of God, and to improve thy faith in it from such scripture arguments, as these.

First the nature of the divine covenant, which is not only the

Severings.

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unchangeable will of the eternal Three, but is also their agreement confirmed by oath concerning the

heirs of promise.

The Father loved them as his children, freely, with an everlasting love: he chose them, and gave them to his son: he engaged to keep them by his power through faith unto salvation.

The Son accepted them, and wrote all their names in his book (not one of them therefore can be lost) he undertook to be made man, and to live, and die for them; to rise from the dead, to ascend, and to intercede for them: and he sitteth as king mediator upon the throne, till every one of them be brought to glory.

The holy Spirit covenanted to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love, and to apply

the

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the bleffings of the son's salvation. He undertook to quicken the heirs of promise, to call them effectually, to guide, to strengthen, to sanctify, and to comfort them; yea he is not to leave them, till the number of the elect be perfected. Therefore HE ABIDES WITH THEM FOR EVER.

In this covenant the eternal Three have undertaken for every heir of promise—to do all for him, and all in him-for the means, and for the end-fo that not one of them can perish: for faithfulness to the covenant is one of the highest honors of the Godhead: " I " am Jehovah your Alehim which " KEEPETH covenant, I will EVER " BE MINDFUL of my covenant-"My covenant WILL I " BREAK, nor alter the thing that " is gone out of my mouth." What strong consolation is there in these words!

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words! Study them, O my foul, that by them thy faith may be established, and they may do thee good, like a medicine.

Thou art afraid of falling away; but the bleffed Trinity have undertaken to hold thee up, and their covenant engagements are to be the ground of thy believing, that they will fulfill what they have promised. Observe and adore the goodness of God; fee, how he meets thy doubts and answers thine objections-" An oath for con-" firmation is among men an end " of all strife: wherein God will-" ing more abundantly to shew to " the heirs of promise the im-" mutability of his counsel con-" firmed it by an oath: that by " two immutable things, in which "it was impossible for God to lie, " we might have a strong confolation

" lation, who have fled for refuge" to Jesus. Thy faith should run parallel with this promise, and should safely trust as far as it warrants thee: now it gives thee sufficient reason to conclude, that thy state before God is immutable, and that he has determined thou shalt not fall away and perish: For observe

Secondly, His design in the covenant. He knew thy frame, thine infirmities, and thy temptations, and therefore he provided the covenant, and promised the blessings of it upon oath, for thy sake—to end All strife in thy conscience—and to give thee strong consolation. This was his mind and will. He revealed it for thee, to settle thy heart in believing, and to administer to thee great comfort. Weigh attentively each of these particulars, and then say, what more could have

have been done to fatisfy thee of thine immutable persevering.

But thou thinkest, "Such trials" as thine are uncommon, and per"haps not provided for in the co"venant, and therefore it can be
"no disparagement to the divine
"faithfulness if thou shouldst fall
"away." How can this be, since
the everlasting covenant is orderED IN ALL THINGS, and on the
part of God is absolutely sure—
nothing that concerns thee is lest
out of it—not a single hair of thy
head—thy trials are all appointed
and ordered, and the end also which
they are to answer.

Perhaps from the clear evidence of the divine record thou art convinced of the covenant of God to fave the heirs of promise, and of his engaging to keep them that they shall never perish, but thou

art

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art afraid thou art not in the covenant, nor an heir of promise. From whence arise thy fears? From fcripture? No. All scripture is on thy fide. Hast thou not fled, as a poor finner, to Jesus for refuge? Haft thou not acknowleged his divine nature, and his all-fufficient work? And though thou art now tempted to doubt, yet some faith is still fighting against unbelief? These are covenant bleffings. O look up then to Jefus-why not THY Jesus? But however look to him-keep looking on-and he will give thee reason to be ashamed of thy doubts and fears.

But the Lord hides himself from me, and therefore I fear I am not in his favor. This objection is answered in the charter of grace—I WILL NOT TURN AWAY FROM DOING THEE GOOD. He has hid

his

his face, and thou art troubled: this trouble is for good. It should put thee upon enquiring into the reason of God's hiding himself. It should humble thee, and should exercise thy faith upon such a scripture as this-" For the iniquity of "his covetoufness was I wroth " and fmote him, I hid me, and " was wroth and he went on fro-" wardly in the way of his heart: " I have feen his ways and will heal "him, I will lead him also and " will restore comforts to him and " to his mourners." Although he hid himself, yet he had love to his people-although he smote them, yet it was a fatherly correction. But

Thou fearest, God not only hides his face, but has also quite forsaken thee: He may, as to thy sense and feeling, but not as to his own purpose,

pofe, which changeth not. Hear how he speaks to thee, and filences thy doubts-" For a fmall moment " have I forfaken thee, but with " great mercies will I gather thee: "in a little wrath I hid my face "from thee for a moment, but " with everlasting kindness will I "have mercy on thee, faith the "Lord thy redeemer." How gracious is thy God! What infinite mercy is it, that he should give thee fuch promises, so suited to the trials of thy faith, to preserve thee under them, and to bring thee out of them! Read carefully, over and over again, these promises: and may every reading of them disperse the cloud of unbelief, until thy foul be enlivened with the light of the Lord's loving countenance.

But perhaps thou art in a worse case, as to thine own apprehen-

fion:

fion: "Thou thinkest God is incensed against me, and justly—he has cast me off, and I can expect no more savor at his hands: once indeed I thought he loved me, but I have fallen into a great sin—an old, besetting sin—my conscience accuses me of committing it against light and conviction—it is a soul black spot, such as is not to be found upon the children of God."

Thou art fallen: And wilt thou lie there, and not be raised up again? Thou art under guilt: And wilt thou nurse it, and add sin to sin? Aggravate the sinfulness of thy fall, as much as thou wilt, yet thou canst not be truly humbled for it, but by returning to God, and by trusting in the plenteous redemption, that is in Christ Jesus. Then thy heart will be softened and melted into love, free grace will have

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its due honor, and thou wilt fee what the scripture fays of thy case in its divine truth and majesty. Thou wilt feel thyfelf exactly what the word of God fays of thee-a fallen finful creature—in thee (that is in thy flesh) dwelleth no good thing-fo that there is not any fin, but thou art capable of falling into it through the strength of temptation. So long as thou art in the body, the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spiritagainst the flesh; in this conflict thou mayest fall, but the covenant secures thee from perishing. Abraham the father of the faithful fell—the friend of God fell into the same sin again and again. Moses fell: so did David. Peter forewarned fell: fo did all the apostles. Yet they were believers, and they did recover themselves out of the snare of the devil:

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devil: For whatever fin thou art fallen into may be pardoned, as theirs was. "The blood of Jesus "Christ cleanseth from all fin"there is in it an infinite virtue to wash away every spot and stainit is a public fountain—it stands open for daily use, that believers may wash and be clean-it is always, at every given moment effectual—it CLEANSETH, in the prefent tense, now-to-day, while it is called to-day: For there is nothing new to be fuffered on the part of Christ, in order to take away fin. He put it away by the facrifice of himself: The Father accepted it; and thus proclaims the free forgiveness of all the trespasses, for which the atonement was made -" I will be merciful to their un-" righteousness, and their sins and " their iniquities will I remember " no

devondent

" no more." Why dost thou reject the comfort of this promise? It is fuited to thy present distress, and is the remedy for it. Thou art fallen into unrighteousness-God fays, I will be merciful to it. Thou art fallen into fins and iniquities,-he fays, I will remember them no more. Thou mayest remember thy fall, but let it be in order to rife from it by faith. It should teach thee thy need of the blood of the lamb. It should bring thee to sprinkle it afresh upon thy conscience, and to live safe and happy under the protection of it. Thus apply it to thy fall and thou wilt repent aright; thou wilt be truly humbled and made more watchful. Thou wilt live more by faith in thy covenant God, wilt glorify more the infinitely perfect falvation of Jesus, and wilt be more dependent

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dependent upon the grace and keep-

ing of the eternal Spirit.

Confider then, O my foul, the rich, abounding, super-abounding grace of thy God in making fuch a provision for raising thee up, when fallen into fin. He intended the promises in the covenant should be the means of thy recovery, as they give thee good ground still to trust in a covenant God, and in his immutable counsel and oath. O lie not then in guilt. Rest not in unbelief. Give not place to the devil. The Lord has put words into thy mouth, may he help thee in the faith of thy heart to take them up, and fay-" Rejoice not " against me, O mine enemy, when " I fall, I shall arise; when I sit " in darkness, the Lord shall be a "light unto me: I will bear the " indignation of the Lord, because

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"I have finned against him, until
he plead my cause, and execute
judgment for me; he will bring
me forth to the light, and I shall
behold his righteousness." If the
Lord open to thee the rich treasury
of grace in this scripture, and enable thee to depend on the ample
security here given for raising thee
from thy fall, then consider in the

Third place, the express promises made in the covenant, that the believer shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. These promises are not conditional, made to the believer upon certain terms, as if upon doing his part God would do his also: for he does not stand by his own will, or strength, or faithfulness—he does not hold out to the end by his own diligence and watchfulness in means—or receive the crown of glory as the merited

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merited reward of any works of righteousness done by him. The promises are all of free grace, not dependent on mans will, but on God's; not yea and nay, but of absolutely certain fulfillment. They were all made in the covenant to Christ the head, and are already made good to Christ, as the head, for the use of his members-" For " ALL the promises of God are in "him yea, and in him Amen." He was given for the covenant of his people, and as fuch, he undertook to do all their works for them, and in them, and therefore all the promised bleffings of the covenant are laid up in his fulness-"in him "they are yea"—and laid up, as the head has the fulness of the fenses for the use of his members -" in him they are Amen." He communicates the promifed blef-VOL. II. fings

fings freely, not conditionally; by believing, and not for working:

"Therefore (fays the apostle speak-

"ing of Christ's righteousness) it is of faith, that it might be by

" grace, to the end the promise

" might be fure to all the feed."

In this fovereign manner and style runs the covenant, and every promise in it-I WILL BE THEIR God, of mine own mere motion and grace, and according to the good pleafure of mine own will-AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE -my will shall make them willing in the day of my power: for I will work in them both to will and to do: yea, I will be a Father unto them and they shall be my fons and daughters, faith the Lord almighty. The word FATHER relates to his children, and expresses the unchangeable love of his heart towards

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wards them: it is a dear covenant name, and denotes the inseparable connection between him and his children: whenever they hear it, it should always excite in them an idea of his everlasting affection. He loves his family as a Father, and loves every one of them with the fame almighty love. He cannot change. He cannot cease to be a Father, and they cannot cease to be his children. His name is a fecurity to them, that they cannot perish: for if one of them could, they all might. And then his covenant purpose to bring many sons unto glory would be defeated-his relation to them as their Father would be broken—he would be a Father without children—he would deny them the promifed bleffings. -he would forget to be gracious to them-his will concerning them Q 2 would

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would change or would be overruled by fome opposite will-and his great plan in the covenant would come to nothing. But these things cannot possibly be. He is the Father of his children, and he has engaged, by promise and oath, to love, to bless, and to keep them for ever. Out of perfect love he gave them to his Son, who undertook to be their Saviour: he came and was made man, Jehovah incarnate, to live and die for them. He was fo delighted with them (for he has all their names written in his book) and with the work, that he was straitened till it was accomplished! Bleffings on him for ever, it is finished. The royal Saviour is upon the throne, almighty to fave his dear redeemed. He would lose his name, which is above every name, the honors of his falvation would would fade away upon his head, and the glories of his offices would come to nothing, if one whom Jefus lived and died to fave should perish. But it is not possible. Whom he loves, he loves unto the " I give unto them, fays he, " eternal life, and they shall never " perish, neither shall any pluck "them out of my hand." They are his feed—and it was covenanted, that he should see his seed. They are the travel of his fouland he shall see of the travel of his foul, and shall be satisfied. How can he be fatisfied, if any one of them should be lost? He prayed-" Holy Father, keep through thine "own name, those whom thou " hast given me, that they may be "one, as we are one." And the Father always heard him. He prayed, that they might be with him,

him, where he is, to fee his glory: and the holy Spirit covenanted to bring them to it-he undertook as his name Spirit imports, to breathe life into them, to call, to convert them, to keep them, and to give them every thing needful for their spiritual life. How can they fail of coming to glory, being thus kept for it by the power of God? The holy Spirit would lose his name Spirit or breath of life, and his office, which is to abide with. and to dwell for ever in the elect people of God, if any one of them should die from God, and perish. Thus there is full fecurity given by the names and offices of the Trinity, that believers shall be kept from falling away. The Father cannot be without his children. The glory of Jesus would fade away, if one of his redeemed was plucked plucked out of his hand. The divine honors of the Spirit of life would be eclipsed, if he was to forfake his charge, and fuffer any of the redeemed to fall into hell. But these things cannot be. The will of the Father, Son and Spirit, is the same concerning the salvation of the elect, which is as fecure as covenant-bonds and oaths can make it.

Art thou then, O my foul, established in this great truth? Dost thou yield to the power of the evidence which the bleffed Trinity have vouchsafed to give thee? Meditate carefully upon it for the growth of thy faith. Search the fcriptures, and observe how clearly God declares his fixt purpose to keep his people, and to hold them up unto the end. The great preacher of the gospel in the Old

Q 4 Testament Testament church speaks thus of the unchangeable will of a covenant God-" The mountains shall " depart, and the hills be removed, "but my kindness shall not depart " from thee, neither shall the co-" venant of my peace be removed, " faith the Lord that hath mercy " on thee." A great preacher in the New Testament church has confirmed the fame precious truth. He is treating of the golden chain of falvation, and shewing how inseparable every link of it is, and in this prospect he triumphs-"Who shall lay any thing to the "charge of God's elect? It is "God that justifieth, who is he "that condemneth? It is Christ "that died, yea rather that is risen " again, who is even at the right " hand of God, who also maketh " intercession for us. Who shall " separate

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" feparate us from the love of " Christ? Shall tribulation, or dif-" trefs, or persecution, or famine, " or nakedness, or sword? Nay, " in all these things we are more "than conquerors through him "that loveth us." By the mouth of these two infallible witnesses the truth is established—they depose, that the covenant is immutable, and that nothing can separate believers from the love, wherewith God loves them in his Son. O most comfortable doctrine! How encouraging is it in any undertaking to fet about it with certain hope of fuccess. How animating in our Christian walk, how reviving in the dark and difficult paths of it, to have God's promise, that he will keep us, and bring us to an happy end! How pleasing is it to go on by faith in our warfare, casting Q 5

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casting all our care upon him, who careth for us! How delightful is it to trust his promise, and daily to find it made good—" Ye are kept "by the power of God through " faith unto eternal falvation." Here, O my foul, thou art to feek for strong consolation amidst the trials and difficulties of thy walk. Thou art afraid of falling-God has engaged to hold thee up. Thou hast been tempted to think, thou shouldst fall quite away, and come to nothing-but God fays, thou art PRESERVED in Christ Jesus-His covenant and oath are made to confirm the faith of thy persevering. Thou standest by faith, and thy faith should lead thee to rest fafely on what God fays about thy standing: And for thy faith itself, its continuing, its encreasing, thou hast his infallible faithfulness to depend

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depend upon. Thou art weak—but he keeps thee by his power. Thine enemies are strong — but none of them shall pluck thee out of his hand. Thou art willing to join them, and to depart from the living God—but he has promised to put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not depart from him. He meets with thy doubts, and answers all thine objections in a word—For he hath said, I will NEVER LEAVE THEE, NOR FOR-SAKE THEE.

Be of good courage then, O my foul, and go forward, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and he will bring thee safe to the end of thy journey. He has promised it. Put thyself into his hands, and give him the glory of keeping thee. He will hold up thy goings in his paths, that thy footsteps

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footsteps slip not. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. How then canst thou miscarry, fafe under his guidance and keeping? Commit thy ways unto the Lord. Do it fimply. Look up by faith to his promise, and then lean on his arm. Thus going on thou mayst rejoice at every step in the Lord thy God. He has left thee a fweet hymn upon the fubject; with which the weary travellers to Sion have often refreshed their spirits. Take it up, and fing it after them. Study it. Mix faith with it: And with perfect reliance on what God, who cannot lie, has promifed in it to do for thee, fing and make melody with it in thy heart unto the Lord-

" In

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"In that day fing ye unto her, " A vineyard of red wine; I the " Lord do keep it: I will water it " every moment: Lest any hurt it, "I will keep it night and day. " Fury is not in me: Who would " fet the briers and thorns against " me in battle? I would go thro' " them, I would burn them toge-"ther. Or will he take hold of " my strength, that he may make " peace with me, then he shall " make peace with me. He shall " cause them that come of Jacob " to take root: Ifrael shall blossom " and bud, and shall fill the face " of the world with fruit."

O my good God and faithful keeper, I do believe these precious promises; help mine unbelief. Forgive my distrusting thy faithfulness, and enable me stedsastly to rely upon it for the future. What return

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turn can I make unto thee for grafting me into the true vine! O Lord this love furpaffeth knowledge. I was fit for nothing but the fire, and thou hast brought me into the vineyard of red wine, and hast enabled me to trust in that blood of the lamb, which cheereth God and man. On this my foul lives, and is refreshed. And being through grace in him, and living on him, I bless thee, holy Father, for thy faithful promife to keep me unto the end. I am still an easy prey to all those who seek the hurt of my foul; but thou hast given me thy word, that lest any hurt me, thou wilt keep me night and day. I confess, gracious God, that I have dishonored thee by doubting of thy love and by questioning its unchangeableness, but now I believe that fury is not in thee to any

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any one branch in the true vine. There is love, and nothing but love in all thy dealings with Christ, and with his Forgive my guilty fears, and fuspicions of thy forsaking me, arifing from my weakness and from the strength of mine enemies: I now fee that thou canst as easily consume them, as fire can briers and thorns. Lord increase my faith in thy promised strength, that I may lay hold of it for peace, and may keep fast hold of it for maintaining peace with thee always and by all means. O grant me this my good God, that my faith may work more by love. Let me take deeper root in Jesus, and grow up more into him, bloffoming and budding and flourishing in vineyard. I depend upon thee to keep me a branch in him, and to make me a fruitful branch, bringing

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ing forth plentifully the fruits of righteousness which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God. I believe the work is [thine-thou haft begun it-and thou wilt carry it on unto the day of the Lord Jesus. Thou art faithful to thy word and work. In dependence upon thy faithfulness I hope to persevere. Let it be done unto me according to thy promifes, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Hear, Lord, and answer for thy mercies fake in Jesus, to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Godhead be equal glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

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CHAP. XV.

The believer finishes his course, and enters into rest.

HE believer is now happily arrived at the verge of life. Goodness and mercy have followed him all his days, and will not lose their glory by forfaking him at the close of them. It is appointed unto all men once to die, and his fixt time is at hand. The body is returning to dust, and the spirit must appear before the throne of God. In this trying hour he trusts to the principles, which had carried him through life, and he finds them a perfect preservative from the fear and from the power of death. The fame faith in a reconciled God and loving loving Father keeps peace in his conscience, and love in his heart. He depends upon the atonement of Immanuel, and is safe: he wraps himself up in the robe of Immanuels righteousness, and is happy. He knows he shall be found in Jesus, when he stands before God; and therefore he looks upon death as his friend, and meets it with a hope full of glory and immortality.

This is the privilege of believers in Jesus. They die in peace. Their principles are mighty through God to support and comfort them in the hour of death. Reader, are these principles thine? Examine carefully. Come to a point in this matter: for it is of infinite and eternal moment. What is thy state? Art thou prepared to die? Perhaps thou art openly prophane.

prophane. And what wilt thou do upon thy death-bed, when the divine law accuses thee, justice condemns thee, and the terrors of hell take hold of thee? The stings of guilt at such a time will be worse in the conscience, than all the tortures that thy sick body can possibly seel. But if thy conscience be asleep—O what a dreadful death! if thou go out of the world with thine eyes shut, and open them not till thou find the slames of hell about thee.

Perhaps thou art not afraid, because thou hast a decent outside: O take care of trusting in thyself, lest thou shoulds have thy portion with the openly prophane. If thou make what thou art, or hast, any ground of thy hope before God, if thou depend on thy duties or righteousness, or join them with the work

of Christ, and meet death in this confidence—How dreadful will be thy mistake! How inevitable thy ruin! Such false hopes are thus described - "Behold all ye that "kindle a fire and compass your-" felves about with sparks, walk " in the light of your fire, and in " the sparks that ye have kindled" -But mind the end-thus faith the Lord-" This shall ye have of " mine hand, ye shall lie down in "forrow." And together with them will the open enemy of God and his Christ lie down. A denier of revelation is brought to the bed of languishing—a flow lingering distemper is carrying him off—the physician has given him over-his difease is mortal and he is convinced of it. But alass! he has no preparation for death and judgment. He has some Christian friends

friends and they talk freely to him about his eternal state, but he will hear nothing of his guilt, or of his want of a Saviour. They get a minister of Christ to visit him, and he speaks to him of fin, which is the transgression of the holy law, and of the justice of God which is engaged to give transgressors their due, and of the impossibility of his finding mercy at the judgment feat, until every demand be fatisfied, which law and justice have upon him: He tries to persuade the dying man of the Godhead of Jesus, and of the divine work of Jesus, but in vain. He sets at nought the minister's advice, and with a hardened and impenitent heart replies—Be it as it will with me in eternity, I'll have nothing to do with your Christ. So he died. We need not follow him to the judgment judgment seattoknow what became of his soul. The infallible record has declared what will be the portion of the unbelieving. Their misery is as certain as the truth of God. O reader examine thyself: for he that believeth not is condemned already: because he hath not believed in the name of the only

begotten Son of God.

Perhaps thou art in name a Christian, but what thinkest thou of Christ? The grandheresy of this day is about his person, and if thou art sallen into it, there is no hope in thy death. Is he Jehovah? O leave not this matter undetermined. The truth of his word and the glory of his work depend entirely upon this one point; so does thy peace and comfort: For if thou believe him to be any thing but the self-existent God, thou shalt die in thy sins.

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His fufferings cannot avail for thy pardon, nor his obedience for thy righteousness, unless he be Jehovah. Without faith in him, as the self-existent Saviour, death will find thee under guilt, and judgment will leave thee among the enemies of God and his Christ.

Whatever evil there is in death to terrify, whatever pain to hurt; the blessed Jesus by the grace of God tasted it for all his. The grace of the Father gave him to be the surety for his people unto death. He died for them, and as truly tasted death, as ever the nicest palate tasted meat or drink. But it was like a tast—of short duration—it was not possible, that he should be holden long under the bands of death. He rose again on the third day: And because he lives, believers in him shall live

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also. They are partakers of his victory over death, and share in all its bleffings. The fentence of the broken law is repealed. They do not die to bear the punishment of fin. Christ sustained that. The pains and agonies of death fell upon him-" The forrows of death, " fays he, compassed me, and the " pains of hell gat hold upon me." He was a just man, who had no reason to fear death, but being found in the place of his people with their fins upon him, he was to bear every thing that was dreadful in death. Hence his agonies at the approach of it-" My "heart, fays he, is fore pained " within me, and the terrors of " death are fallen upon me: Fear-"fulness and trembling are come " upon me, and horror hath over-" whelmed me." He endured those

those inconceivable horrors to deliver them, who through fear of death had been all their life-time subject to bondage. But the bondage is at an end, when they believe in his victory. Their fears are dispelled, when they see the glory of the battle, which he fought and won—How by dying he took away fing satisfied justice, removed the curse, conquered death, broke its sceptre, took out its sting, and left nothing in it but what is friendly to them. In these believing views they can meet death with confidence: For they cannot tast that in death, which Christ tasted. He felt it, that they might not feel it: He died in agonies, that they might die in peace. O my most loving and precious Jesus, I believe this, let not any unbelief in me dishonor thy complete conquest over all that VOL. II. R 18

is fearful or painful in dying. My times are in thy hand: When thou art pleased to bring them to an end, let me find death swallowed up in victory: O that I may then triumph with thy redeemed-" What can separate us from the love of Christ-shall the sting of death, or the fear of death, or of fatan, or of hell? No, thanks be to Godthese were all conquered, when Jefus died; fubdued for ever, when he rose again. And he has left us many precious promifes, that we trusting in him shall share in his victory, and find the bleffings of it in the hour of death.

Attend then, O my foul, to what he has engaged to bestow upon his dying disciples, as the fruit of his death; and give him credit, not doubting but he will make it good. Live now in the comfort of his

his promises, and fear not. The almighty Jesus will be with thee, and thou shalt conquer with him in the hour of death. Observe his word, which cannot be broken -" I will ranfom them from the " power of the grave, I will te-" deem them from death: O death " I will be thy plagues, O grave I " will be thy destruction; repent-" ance shall be hid from mine " eyes." The ransom which he here engages to pay for his, he paid, as their furety, and he daily applies it to them, as their Saviour. Upon quoting this promife, and finding by faith the happy fulfillment of it, mark how the apostle rejoices with the Corinthians in the near view of death—" O death, where " is thy sting? O grave, where is "thy victory? The sting of death " is fin, and the strength of fin is R 2 " the

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" the law: but thanks be to God. " who giveth us the victory through " Jesus Christ our Lord." O thou most glorious conqueror, almighty Jesus, eternal thanks be to thee, that the law cannot accuse, sin cannot condemn, death cannot fting thy redeemed. Thou hast promised tomake them happy in death, and faithful is thy word. The beloved John is one of thy witnesses -" I heard a voice from heaven " faying unto me, Write, bleffed " are the dead which die in the "Lord:" Write it for the use of my disciples, that it may be the ground of their faith when they come to die: I promise to make them bleffed in their death: being IN me, members under me their head, and living IN the Lord, they shall die in the Lord: they shall have union with me, and commuorly ... nion

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nion too, when they are dying: the hour of death, the time of their diffolution shall be a feason of great bleffedness: they shall have my presence in their last moments: I will walk with them through the valley of the shadow of death, and they shall fear no evil; my rod and my staff shall then comfort them. O my God, make thy word good. Sweet Jesus, write this promise upon my heart. O help me to mix faith with it, that when mine appointed time is come, I may experience the bleffedness of dying in the Lord. I wait for the time, it is not far off. O keep me, Jesus, till that hour. Keep me, Jesus, in that hour. Save me through life and death, and bless me with thine eternal falvation. Hear, and anfwer for thy mercies fake. Amen.

R 3 Meditate

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Meditate, O my foul, upon these bleffings. Confider, how great, how many they are. Consider also thine unworthiness: Thou art less than the least of them. And yet God has fet his love upon thee, and has given thee the greatest of them. He has called thee to the knowlege of his love in Jesus, and has shed it abroad in thy heart. He has fet thee in the way that leads to the eternal enjoyment of his love, has promifed to keep thee all the way, and to bless thee at the end of it. He will make thee bleffed in death, and bleffed for evermore. Hitherto thou hast found him faithful. Not one good thing has failed, which thou didst ask in faith, and wait for at his hands-Review all his dealings with thee, and fee what infinite mercy there was in them. He made

made thy walk prosperous, thy warfare successful, thy crosses sanctified. Thou hast not taken a false step, but when thou wast not living by the faith of the Son of God. O trust him then, and be not afraid. His love has brought thee thus far: He has led thee in the right way to the verge of life, and he declares he will not leave thee nor forfake thee in the hour of death. Fear not to look down: Fear not to go down with Jesus into the grave. He has promised -" I will be with thee;" and wherever he is there is heaven. He is with his dying friends, and they are bleffed indeed. They die in faith—they live by faith in death —and as foon as faith ceases, they live with their God for ever. body falls afleep, and refts fafely till the morning of the refurrection. The R4

The foul in a moment enters into the joy of its Lord—a joy like his -pure and holy—a fulness of joy -every fense has its proper object -enjoysit-and is fatisfied for ever. O what will the heart feel in this bleffedness! What acknowlegements will it make to God and the lamb. To praise him for the wonders of his grace in bringing to that glory will be the happy employment of eternity. To fee him as he is in his divine majesty is heaven. For how great communications of his love the being ever with him, and ever like him will make the foul capable, we cannot perfectly conceive. These things are at prefent too high and heavenly, even for our thoughts. By faith we fometimes have a little glimple of the glory to be revealed, and it eclipses all the grandor of the world. eur There

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There are happy moments, when we are permitted to behold the king in his beauty, when he difcovers his matchless loveliness, and gives us a tast of the heavenly feast: at such blessed seasons the soul is bowed down and humbled to the dust, adoring the infinite mercy and goodness of God. If there be so much of heaven in these manifestations of divine love, what must the full enjoyment be? We may suppose a happy soul, entered into rest thus meditating upon the grace, which brought it to that glory.

Bleffing and thanks without ceafing be unto Father, Son and Spirit,
through whose sovereign grace I
was chosen to this bleffedness, and
am now brought to the perfect
and everlasting enjoyment of it.
This communion with the Godhead through Jesus is as far beyond

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my former thoughts of it, as the heaven is above the earth. How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty, that the most high and holy one would thus communicate his love unto finful creatures. Glory be to thee, holy Father, for predestinating me to the adoption of children, and for the free gift of the heavenly inheritance. Glory be to thee incarnate Jehovah, for thy covenant-undertakings for me, for thy life, death and complete falvation. I worship thee, I glorify thee, O God the Holy Ghost, for quickening me, for teaching me and enabling me through believing in Jefus to experience the love of the Father, and for bringing me to enjoy his endless bleffings. Surely the goodness and mercy of the holy Trinity have followed me all the days of my life, were

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were with me when I walked thro' the valley of the shadow of death, and are now my most blessed portion in the house of the Lord. I am made a pillar in the temple of my God, and am to go no more out. Owhat exceeding riches of grace are these! What has God done for me! Angels, and brethren, help me to praise. My debt is immense of No faved finner can owe him more. It is growing every moment. My praises pay none of it. With my thankful heart, and it is all thankfulness, I only acknowlege his infinite goodness, and own myself his eternal debtor. Bleffing and honor and glory and power be unto him that fitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever. Down nothing and au

Reader, art thou in the way which leads to this glory? If not, may

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may the Lord be merciful unto

thee and bring thee unto it.

If thou art seeking to be set right in it: Remember Jesus is THE WAY. May his good Spirit enable thee to believe in his word and work to the saving of thy soul.

If thou art in the way, and hast communion with the Father thro' faith in the atonement and righteoutness of his Son, art thou maintaining it in thy daily walk, and improving it in every duty? And art thou going on thy way rejoicing in Godd If thou art forrowing for outward crosses, or burdened with inward conflicts, canft thou nevertheless find joy and peace in believing? Dost thou march on, victorious in thy warfare, keeping up communion with God against all the opposition of thy spiritual enemies? And is thy faith establish-

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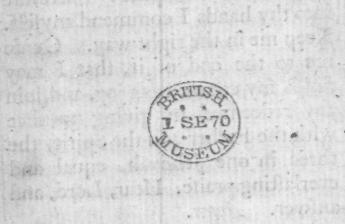
ed upon the faithfulness of God, that he will carry on his own work in thee unto the day of the Lord Jefus? In this faith art thou now living? And in this faith doft thou hope to die. Has God indeed done these wonders for thee? O bless him then with me, and let us magnify his name together. Be thou exalted Lord, in us, and by us. Every day we would grow up into nearer and holier communion with thee. We defire to be more like thee, and to shew forth more of thy lovely image before men. O help us to praise thee better with our lips and lives. By the communion of the Holy Ghoft we would communicate more by faith with the Son in his falvation, and with the Father in his love. O holy, bleffed and glorious Trinity, in this divine fellowship we hope

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hope to find our heaven upon earth: Let it be growing and increasing, helped forward by all means, and if it please thee, by these volumes. Make them, Lord, the instrument under thee of leading thy people into the right way; and of establishing them in it. Accompany the reading of them with the teaching of thy spirit, and to the advancement of thy glory. I present the books unto thee, ever glorious Jesus, and lay them at thy feet. Thou knowest my heart: accept them graciously, as a public acknowlegement for inestimable mercies. In thy great compassion overlook the faults in them: what is agreeable to the fcripture is thine own. Make use of it to thy praise. I devote myself, my body, and soul, my tongue and pen, all I have and am to thy fervice. I would not look

look upon myself, as any longer mine own, but being bought with a price, I would glorify thee in the use of all thy gifts and graces. With thee I defire to walk through life. In thine arms I hope to die. Through thee I expect foon to enjoy perfect communion with the Father, and the Spirit: Therefore into thy hands I commend myfelf. Keep me in the right way. Guide me to the end of it, that I may finish my course with joy, and join thy redeemed in giving to thee with the Father and the Spirit, the three in one Jehovah, equal and everlasting praise. Hear, Lord, and answer. Amen.

The End of the Second Volume.



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